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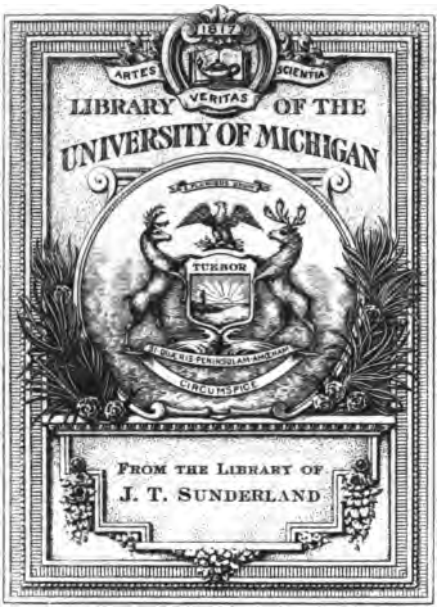

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THE CAUSES OF PRESENT DISCONTENTS IN INDIA

BY
C. ~~James~~ Charles O'DONNELL, M.P.

"So far as the unrest arose from grievances let them be sifted and removed. . . . This (the present system) was the obsolete hugger-mugger method."—LORD CURZON'S speech of July 24, 1907.

"He is a bad citizen who gives cause for discontent, but he is a worse one who stifles inquiry."—BURKE.

"Until this wretched movement began it was extraordinary how amicable the relations between them (the educated class of Bengalis) and the Europeans had become. The spirit of friendliness was growing and its trend was towards that happy sympathy which should, and does in many cases, exist between men of different races." — The *Englishman* of Calcutta, July, 1906.

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Preface

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THE Liberal Government is committed to a policy of coercion in India, and it seems impossible now to repress crime and maintain order by any other means. The misfortune is that since the Liberal Party has come into power every opportunity of adopting conciliatory methods has been rejected. There is, however, still time to strengthen the hands of the moderate and loyal section—the great majority—of the Indian people, but this can be done only by acceding to reasonable requests and by proving that loyalty and goodwill are recognised and rewarded. Otherwise the British Empire must prepare for a conflict, involving one-fifth part of the human race, which cannot be contemplated without a shudder.

Coercion.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, on his return from India nearly two years ago, pleaded at the Mansion House for "a wider element of sympathy" in Indian administration. It was sympathy that enabled John Lawrence to lead the Sikhs to the saving of our Indian Empire in 1857. It was sympathy that made Lord Roberts the most successful of Indian Commanders-in-Chief. No

Sympathy.

one who reads the following pages can say that there has been much sympathy in our recent dealings with our Indian fellow-subjects.

We have given to India in many ways the best government she has ever had, or, perhaps, is ever likely to have. We have sinned badly by excessive taxation on the peasantry, but India was willing to pay a long price for peace, order, and justice. That there is now discontent is entirely our own fault. Lord Curzon found India loyal—friendly, even to himself. He left it the moody, disturbed country we now know. Yet he is not alone to blame. In a letter to the *Times* on the 15th of June last, the late Viceroy stated :—

Our Own Fault.

" . . . The symptoms which have lately caused so much anxiety were not apparent during the nearly seven years for which I was responsible for the government of India; nor was I ever called upon to take measures for the repression of sedition or the restoration of order."

That is a very uncomfortable fact, the truth of which an honest Liberal cannot deny. It is since the advent of the Liberal Government to power that the people of India have passed from protest to something nearly approaching passion. It is true that Lord Curzon himself sowed the seeds of disorder, but they would never have grown into the rank weeds which now hold the field if the Liberal Party had eradicated them by redress of grievances. The people endured much at the hands of Lord Curzon, but they were patient

Liberal Responsibility.

and orderly. They believed that a better time was coming; but when they found that their prayers were blocked by the unjust and unstatesmanlike doctrine of the "settled fact" they gave way to that hopeless resentment which in all lands drives men to the verge and past the verge of passionate despair.

The slight improvement in public feeling in India gives the opportunity of discussing Indian affairs which has been wanting for the past two years. The cry has been, "Do not say a word for fear you may be aiding sedition." There was, as a matter of fact, no sedition worthy of the name, though grave and angry discontent was widespread, but many estimable people believed in its existence. The following passage from "A Vision of India," by Mr. Sidney Low, whom Mr. Morley has described as "a gentleman of proved competence in political subjects," states the actual position with great acumen:—

No Sedition.

"The journey of the Prince of Wales showed clearly that there is a deep and widespread attachment to the Imperial House among the Indian people; and even where there is discontent with the mode of government, there is no feeling against the Throne. Calcutta, when the Prince of Wales visited it, was in the trough of a furious agitation against the Partition of Bengal—an agitation which on one occasion had caused every native shop to be closed in the city as a sign of mourning. Yet when the Prince appeared amongst this angry populace, he was received not only with cordiality, but even with demonstrative enthusiasm."

It is well to bear in mind that in many countries

this very cry of "sedition" has been found a most convenient veil for bureaucratic failure.

The Partition of Bengal is the open sore in the body politic of our Indian Empire. The following chapters on the subject (V. and VI.) should convince any just-minded man that a great wrong has been done. This measure was condemned from its inception—

The Partition of Bengal.

(i) By the Bengal Civil Service, *i.e.*, by the officials charged with the administration of the Province.
(ii) By the whole Press, European and Indian, English and Conservative journals being specially vigorous in their hostility.
(iii) By the European and Indian merchants, through their respective Chambers of Commerce.
(iv) By the Hindu nobility, gentry, and peasantry.
(v) By the Musalman nobility, gentry, and peasantry; and
(vi) By the educated classes of both communities, Hindu and Musalman.

The Nawab Sayyid Amir Husain, C.I.E., writing on the 17th of February, 1904, as Honorary Secretary of the Central Muhamadan Association—which, he declared, "has its branches all over Bengal"—to the Chief Secretary of the government of Bengal, stated that partition was "neither necessary nor desirable," and that by disrupting an ancient Province it would "break the prescription of many centuries."

In short, the Partition of Bengal was universally and ruthlessly condemned. In the words of the *Englishman*, the premier Conservative journal of Calcutta—

"The Government can hardly be in very much doubt as to the popularity of its proposals to dismember the Province of Bengal. The proposals for partition have been attacked in every key and every language. They are repugnant alike to sentiment and to common sense. They are opposed by every community and by every section of each community. And within the threatened districts themselves they have awakened a storm of passionate protest which has surprised those who have led it."

Although some form of territorial rearrangement may be justifiable, the partition, as finally demarcated by Lord Curzon, is bad in the highest degree from the administrative or English standpoint, involves great unnecessary expense, and from its inherent unfitness cannot be final. It is now being maintained through sheer foolish obstinacy.

The extraordinary unwisdom of the Executive Authorities in India is shown in the censures of the High Court of Calcutta and in the decision of the judge who tried the Punjab riot cases. Chapters VIII. and IX. will, the author believes, be a revelation to the English public, which, he has no manner of doubt, is anxious to see India ruled with justice and common sense. At the same time, Englishmen will feel a great pride in the surpassing equity of our highest courts of law in India.

Executive Unwisdom.

It is also necessary to show that the so-called "reforms" attributed to Mr. Morley, but which are really the work of the Secretaries and others, whom Lord Curzon placed in the highest offices at Simla, are hopelessly at variance with the guiding principle, on which our whole policy in India has been based for more than a century—the firm abstention from religious partisanship. The "reforms" frankly discriminate in favour of the adherents of the Musalman faith, and, equally frankly, are hostile to the educated classes, who are mostly Hindu. Recent appointments to the Council of the Secretary of State also prove a determination in the India Office to maintain Lord Curzon's policy in its most reactionary details.

Partisans in Religion.

The *Pioneer*, the leading English journal in India, as recently as last October gave the following description of the Government of India at the present time:—

"A Top-heavy Bureaucracy."

"The most perfect system of administration which the world has ever seen has come to be regarded by many—and an increasing number—as a top-heavy bureaucratic hierarchy, Byzantine in method if not in spirit, hide-bound by precedent and theory, detached from practical conditions, mechanical and doctrinaire.

"One of the first necessities of the time," it continued, "is to prune off Government action, to let in light and shade. This will not be easy for officials struggling after perfection. They will have to be baptized again; to adore what they have burnt and burn what they have adored; to look to substance, not to form; to distinguish (the most difficult thing in the world) between means and ends; to find out what the people want, not what

they ought to want; to value compromise; to meet one's adversary in the way, and, above all, to leave things alone."

The Author hopes that in the following pages he may be able to establish to some extent the accuracy of these views of Indian Government. It is quite certain that he will be vilified for criticising the Service to which he has had the honour to belong, but he desires to make it quite plain that, except in the last Chapter, it is not the Indian Civil Service to which his criticisms apply, but to the disastrous results of Lord Curzon's policy. The Civil Service continues to be one of the most able, honourable, and hard-working bodies of public servants in the Empire, often carrying out their important duties under most unhealthy and arduous conditions; but they are servants, and it is their duty to give effect to any policy which the Government may adopt, even though distasteful to them. Very many of the more senior would welcome the success of those Members of Parliament who are now seeking to lead back the Government of India to the sane and sympathetic methods of Lords Northbrook, Lansdowne, and Elgin.

The Civil Service.

The Author, some years before he retired from the Indian Civil Service, held the Commissionerships of the Bhagulpur and Rajshahi Divisions, which large administrative charges, each with a population, roundly, of nine millions, have been affected most injuriously by the Partition of Bengal. Seven districts, included in them, with a population of about ten millions, have been transferred from the Calcutta

Lieutenant-Governorship to Eastern Bengal, and careful inquiry has established the fact that in that great population not a single Indian authority, noble or peasant, merchant or lawyer, Municipal Council or District Board was consulted in regard to a change, which, they allege, injures them in nearly every relation of their public and private interests. Can the English people reasonably expect contentment and loyalty to accrue from "an administrative operation, which," in the words of Mr. Morley, "went wholly and decisively against the wishes of most of the people concerned"?

75, QUEEN'S GATE, S.W.
January 25, 1908.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE *Pioneer*, the very able Anglo-Indian journal, which is recognised as the chief organ of Conservative and Governmental opinion in India, has truthfully stated that the small group of ex-officials of the Indian Civil Service, who, as members of Parliament, have attempted to apply Liberal principles to Indian administration, have placed their case before the House of Commons "with studious moderation." Although Imperialist journals in London have been less equitable in their treatment of us, it is my hope that in the following pages I may succeed in convincing even them that we have had a good case.

"Studious Moderation."

Lord Curzon is a master of eloquence, and he rarely put a truth in a more effective form than

when, speaking at a dinner given by the Merchant Taylors' Company on the 3rd of last July, he declared that "the Indian Empire was the greatest achievement, not of warfare, because we did not win the greater part of India by the sword, but of the science of civil government, which the history of the world can show." India was never won by the sword, but what is infinitely more important, it can never be held by the sword. In the pregnant words of the historian of the Mutiny, Mr. G. W. Forrest, C.I.E., in the *Fortnightly Review* of last August, so vast is the population we govern "that if every ryot cast a clod of earth at us our power must melt like snow under the sun." At the same time there is no fact more certain than that any withdrawal or weakening of British authority in India would be calamitous, not only to this Empire, but in an especial degree fatal to the peace and progress of the peoples of India. But that is no reason why Englishmen should refuse to listen to well-founded complaints or should reject the loyally worded petitions of great populations by the crude and irritating doctrine of the "settled fact."

"Not Won by the Sword."

The British Empire in India is firmly based on a great past, which has won admiration from men of all nations. Till within very recent years it might reasonably have been hoped that it would develop along the lines of a broad civilisation. A succession of wise viceroys, from Lord Lawrence to Lords Dufferin, Lansdowne, and Elgin, had further strengthened the edifice by tactful and sympathetic methods. The greatest of

The Failure of a Great Hope.

their services to India was the expansion and improvement of educational facilities, under the stimulus of which a great educated class has grown up, probably the most cultured body of non-European origin in the world. Unfortunately, a time came when an inexperienced Viceroy thought fit to view this class, the highest product of our wisdom, with distrust and dislike. It is to Lord Curzon's system of policing education, of making the University the servant of the bureaucracy, and of curbing the growing influence of the educated class in India that we chiefly owe the present unrest. As I will afterwards show, the so-called reforms attributed to Mr. Morley, but which are really the work of the able and reactionary officials, whom Lord Curzon placed in authority in India, are a thinly disguised continuation of this policy.

A Policy of Contempt.

It is manifest to any one who knows India, that Mr. Morley is absolutely right on two points: first, that, although Indians must be allowed a greatly increased influence in Indian affairs, representative government, as we understand it in England, is at present impossible; and, secondly, that the British Government in India is bound by its highest duty to adopt the most strenuous measures, to use all the forces of the Crown, to maintain order in that Empire. But, whilst recognising that a quasi-autocratic form of administration is at the present time the only one practicable, it is supremely necessary that the Government should be as little bureaucratic and as sensitive to Indian opinion as may be. The reverse is now unquestion-

ably the fact. For several years back and at the present time the Government of India is ultra-bureaucratic, and absolutely ignores the wishes and opinions of the people of the country. In everything Lord Curzon's policy was to treat them with a persistent contempt. A single little incident will elucidate the working of his system. Twenty-five of the fifty members of the Calcutta Municipal Council are elected, and include many Indians of wealth, good family and prominent position. It has recently been proposed to break up this great city into a number of self-governing boroughs—a very mischievous scheme, which I will not here discuss. I would only beg consideration of the full meaning of the following almost incredible fact, as recorded in the *Englishman*, the leading British journal of the Indian metropolis :—

"Not a single elected Commissioner of the Calcutta Municipality has been appointed to a seat on the Committee, which is to draw up a scheme for the decentralisation of the administration of Calcutta."

A Political Danger.

When the question of the Partition of Bengal first came before Parliament, five ex-civil servants of great Indian experience stood up, one after the other, to warn Mr. Morley that this measure was so offensive to the Bengali people that it was a political danger to persevere in it. They were Sir Henry Cotton, K.C.S.I., lately Chief Secretary of Bengal and Chief Commissioner of Assam; Mr. Donald Smeaton, C.S.I., lately member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council; Sir John Jardine,

K.C.I.E., lately Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay; Mr. Hart Davies, a distinguished Bombay officer; and Mr. C. J. O'Donnell, lately Commissioner of the Divisions of Bengal which have suffered most from partition. Mr. Rees, C.I.E., a retired Madras official, who has recently made himself notorious by hostility to educated Indians, said: "He realised that there was a strong public feeling in Bengal against partition, expressed in a legitimate manner in the Press and at public meetings, and also admitted that the Chamber of Commerce of Calcutta was opposed to the measure," this Chamber being the most influential body of Europeans in India. Mr. Morley turned a deaf ear to these warnings.

The Secretary of State, at Arbroath, was hardly just to himself when he spoke of "ex-Indians," whose criticisms of Indian affairs were "too often coloured by personal partisanship," "men who, having acquired the habit of writing whilst they were in the Government, unluckily retain the habit after they come home and live, or ought to live, in peace and quietness amongst their friends here." Had they been Conservatives like Sir Walter Lawrence, Lord Curzon's Private Secretary, whom Mr. Morley has just appointed to the Council of the Secretary of State, their advice would be valuable and a thing to be sought for, but, being the elected representatives of great Liberal constituencies, they should retire to obscurity and hold their tongues. In this fact lies the secret of Mr. Morley's difficulties in Indian administration. He has disregarded the advice and the authority of every one but Ultra-

Mr. Morley's Reactionary Alliance.

Conservatives. The intimacy of the present alliance of the India Office with the Jingoist section of the Conservative Party is proved by its sanctioning the appointment of Mr. Everard Cotes, the Simla correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, on a salary of £1,200 a year to supply information, nominally to officials but really to the English Press.

"Situation not at all Dangerous."

The most accurate statement made by Mr. Morley in his address to his constituents on the 21st October, at Arbroath, was this—

'You will want to know" he said, "how the situation is viewed at this moment in India itself by those who are responsible for the Government of India. I think it is best to be quite straightforward, and the view is not a new view at all. The view is that the *situation is not at all dangerous*, but that it requires serious and urgent attention. That seems to be the verdict, for the moment it is the verdict. Those who are called *Extremists are few*, but they are active, their field is wide, and their nets are far spread. Anybody who has read history knows that the Extremist beats the Moderate by his fire, his fiery energy, his very narrowness and concentration. So be it; we remember it; and we watch it all, with that lesson of historic experience full in our minds. But still we hold that it would be the height of political folly for us at this moment to refuse to do all we can do to rally the Moderates to the cause of the Government, simply because the policy will not satisfy the Extremists. Let us, if we can, rally the Moderates, and, if we are told that the policy will not satisfy the Extremists, so be it; our line will remain the same. There is a great lesson, a great principle, a great maxim. It is the height of folly to refuse to rally Moderates, and what we shall call sensible people, because we will not satisfy Extremists." (Cheers.)

This admirable passage is the old Liberal faith of the Secretary of State coming to the top. The sole question, indeed, is how should we rally the

Moderates—the immense majority of the Indian people—to the side of Government? The answer is very simple and lies at the root of all Liberalism. "Inquire into their grievances and let the inquiry be open and independent." Mr. Morley is, however, so occupied with the Extremists—the small minority—that he has no time to think or even mention the reasonable demands, which the Moderates, such as the nobility, landlords, and gentry of Bengal, have persistently made in the most loyal language for three years back. All one's sympathies are and should be with Mr. Morley, but it is perfectly evident that the gentlemen, who feared that a Liberal Secretary of State might interfere with their autocracy, have laboured hard to convince him that India is on the brink of insurrection, that mutiny is at our doors, and the massacre of Europeans an early probability. Reuter's agents, the *Times*, and the *Daily Mail* have filled in the details of the harrowing picture.

How to Rally the Moderates.

In Parliament also the request of the Anglo-Indian group is nothing very terrifying. To put it in a few words, we have asked that Indian administration should be, at least, replaced in the position in which Lord Lansdowne and Lord Elgin left it—conservative, no doubt, bureaucratic, if you will, but just and even sympathetic, ever ready to listen to grievances and free from coercive methods.

Return to Sympathetic Conservatism

Mr. Morley asked his audience: "Does anybody want me to go to London to-morrow morning and to send a telegram to Lord Kitchener, who is Com-

mander-in-Chief in India, and tell him that he is to disband the native army and send home, as fast as we can dispatch transports, the British contingent of the Army, and bring away the whole of the Civil servants?" No. Nobody, not even the wildest Extremist, ever made such a request, but every native of India, certainly of Eastern India, all the educated Indians of the Empire, ask for a full inquiry into the Partition of Bengal, say, by three judges of the High Court of Justice of England or even by a Committee of the House of Lords. Their case is so invincible that they would welcome any open investigation. All India, especially Western India, prays, and prays humbly, that an independent inquiry should be made into the taxation of the land, an inquiry refused by Lord Curzon. I unhesitatingly ask, Would these acts of justice lead to sedition, or even to discontent? but Mr. Morley, to use his own words, can only "hear through the dark distances the roar and scream of confusion and carnage in India." He has been listening too much to the wily persons, who seek to frighten him by blood-curdling fables from doing what every Liberal believes he is anxious to do. Yet, as I have noted above, towards the middle of his speech the Secretary of State recognises the real fact that the "Extremists are few," and "the situation is not at all dangerous."

Any Fair Inquiry.

India has had for many years a very severe Press law. Lord Curzon, by his Official Secrets Act, made it in some ways the most drastic in the world. The new Coercion Act passed last November at Simla is as severe as any in

Liberal Coercion.

Europe. It practically kills the right of public meeting, which in a country without representative institutions is the only means of making known the grievances of a subject people. Mr. Morley is responsible for this law, and I do not question its necessity in order to control the passions which his policy of "the settled fact" have engendered. But there is one provision of this new legislation which is singularly dangerous. I refer to the system of espionage and oppression involved in giving a notoriously corrupt police the power of the domiciliary visit. The Englishman's house is his castle. To an Indian it is the temple of his honour. In a country where the seclusion of women prevails, trespass means bloodshed. Every Indian member of the Legislative Council protested most vigorously against this provision, but it was carried unanimously by a docile official majority.

CHAPTER II

INDIA AND PARLIAMENT

"In subjecting details of Indian Administration to the supervision and criticism of this House, the Indian Government would be exposed to the kind of criticism which would do no good but harm."—MR. MORLEY'S BUDGET SPEECH, 1906.

IT has been foretold that India will be lost on the floor of the House of Commons. Often during the past two years this prophecy has recurred to my mind, and I have no doubt but that such a calamity, if it ever does happen, will be due not to parliamentary interference but to an unpatriotic apathy that refuses to take the trouble to understand Indian questions.

Parliamentary Indifference.

The sheet anchor of British dominion in India has always been a well-founded belief in the justice of our administration. India is peculiarly a country in which such a belief supersedes almost all other advantages of good government. The right of even the humblest peasant to approach the governing power by way of petition and appeal is ingrained into the Indian character. Under native sovereigns it has always been the practice to permit any and every petitioner

The Right of the Humblest.

to approach in open durbar and seek for redress. The refusal to grant this access and to listen to petitions has been regarded in India for centuries as the worst of governmental faults. This is exactly what an Ultra-Liberal Parliament has done during the past two years.

Every obstacle has been placed in the way of discussion of Indian questions. Even the closure was moved by the Secretary of State when the consideration of the Partition of Bengal was of all matters the most urgent, and in neither of the great speeches he has made on the Indian Budget has he deigned to devote one sentence to mitigate the storm of resentment that ill-omened measure has aroused. When asked if he would receive a deputation of the nobility, gentry, lawyers and merchants of Bengal to state their various grievances under the Partition, he blankly refused. History will record that the subsequent discontent in Bengal was almost entirely due to this attitude of a Liberal Administration.

Closure and Inaccessibility.

On the 6th of last July the Strangers' Gallery of the House of Commons was crowded with an unusual audience. Englishmen were almost absent, but Indians, mostly young men, abounded. They were students who had come from the Far East to study, in our universities and schools of law and medicine, the science of the West. They were just then getting a lesson in the politics of the West, and it was not a very healthy one. The House itself was also crowded whilst the Secretary of State gave his Budget address, which was mostly a philippic

An Unhealthy Lesson.

against discontent and a defence of coercion. He closed his speech and the House quickly dispersed, whilst a few Liberals tried amongst empty benches to invite its members to adopt the following amendment, moved by Mr. G. A. Hardy, M.P. for the Stowmarket Division :—

"That, whilst affirming the imperative necessity of maintaining peace and order in India, this House is of opinion that an inquiry by means of a Parliamentary Committee or Royal Commission should be instituted into the causes at the root of the dissatisfaction."

Liberal Backsliding.

The debate dragged its weary way along till after ten o'clock, when the House, having heard nothing of the arguments and seemingly caring less, assembled again. For hours the front benches on both sides of the House had been absolutely empty, but for a stray Under-Secretary. As eleven o'clock approached the House was filled with honourable members, mostly summoned by the Liberal Whips, ready to reject the reasonable request that Indian grievances should be inquired into by some independent authority. The last speaker—wisely, I submit—talked out the debate, and saved his Party from the indiscretion of such an illiberal decision.

The Courage of Apathy.

Mr. Morley, speaking at Arbroath on the 22nd of October last, took a very different view of this scene, and stated that—

"it is impossible to overrate the courage, the patience, and fidelity with which the present House of Commons has faced a not at all easy moment in Indian Government," adding "I do

augur from the proceedings of the last Session that democracy, in this case at all events, has shown, and I think is going to show, its capacity for facing these enormously difficult and complicated problems."

If a Conservative had used such language it would be clear that he was poking cynical fun at his opponents. The policy of Parliamentary apathy and inaction has found an eloquent exponent, whilst democracy, if democracy is really represented in the Liberal Party, has refused to face the problems of India, and its courage has been that of the ostrich that hides its head in the sands.

The Real Lesson of the Mutiny.

Are these problems really so difficult and so complicated? For a century and a half England has administered India with ease and with astonishing success. But for the terrible mischance of the Mutiny, every territory, as it passed under our dominion, has willingly settled down to obedience and content, Bengal showing an exemplary docility. This is not the place to discuss the circumstances of the great calamity of 1857, but this I will say, that the failure of the Sepoy Army to break our power was due to the loyalty of the civil population and especially to the goodwill of the two bodies that have recently shown marked discontent—I mean the Sikh population of the Punjab and the educated classes throughout India, especially in Bengal. Still it may be well to call to mind that the Mutiny was entirely due to preventible causes, and that if the grievances of the Indian soldiers had been inquired into with sympathy or even intelligence, the black shadow that

still rests between the peoples of England and India would never have been cast across our path of Empire. Lord Roberts, Sir Evelyn Wood, and other great military authorities, who have studied the question, admit that the Sepoys had "sound reason" for fearing injury to their religions as Hindus and Musalmans. Mr. W. H. Lecky, the greatest of English historians in the last century, after a thorough investigation, has stated: "This is a shameful and terrible fact, and if mutiny was ever justifiable, no stronger justification could be given than that of the Sepoy troops."

Despair in Liberalism.

I ask, then, is it wise, is it just that a Liberal House of Commons should absolutely refuse to give a fair hearing to great national and economic grievances at the present day? Does any member of the House of Commons reflect with what feelings that large body of educated young Indians, who watched the debate from the gallery of the House of Commons on July 6th, must have viewed the backsliding of the Liberal Party on that occasion? The effect in India of its action may be judged from the following extract from the *Bengali*, the leading Indian journal of Calcutta, a few days later :—

"We have come to the conclusion, and even sceptics have been converted to the view, that the principles of Liberalism are not meant for India, and that to us it is immaterial whether Liberals or Conservatives are in power. There is but one party which governs India—in which all distinctions between Liberals and Conservatives and Unionists are merged—it is the party of reaction, the party of prestige and of 'settled facts'—the party which will not reconsider a mistake, admitted as such, on the ground that it is a settled fact, and which will not hesitate to set

at naught the elementary principles of justice, and in the name of State-emergency to trample underfoot one of the most sacred of personal rights, the right of the subject to be heard before he is condemned. The disillusionment has come. We have to recast our estimate of English politics and of English public men. The shock is great. It cannot fail to breed an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion, and create misgivings in the public mind even with regard to the measures of Government, initiated with the best of motives. To-day," it continued, "we stand in the unhappy position of having lost all faith in both the political parties in England. If Mr. Morley can act so, what may we not expect of others, of men who have never cared for principles in politics and who have made office the aim of their ambition? This is the one sentiment which is now uppermost in our minds. It is a great wrench when old-standing and long-cherished ideals are torn from their roots and cast aside as images of clay. But to-day this is the mental attitude of the educated class throughout India. They have lost all faith in the Liberal Party."

This is certainly not the language of an incendiary. No graver injury to English prestige, to English authority, is possible than the refusal of the English Parliament to do its most elementary duty. God has placed three hundred millions of human beings under our dominion and the House of Commons is false to its great traditions, false to England too, so long as it hands over that vast population, without supervision or criticism, to a group of temporary officials, however able, however honourable, but possibly impolitic and unwise.

False to its great Traditions.

The *Bengali* is edited by the Honourable Surendranath Banerjea. I still give him the title of "honourable," for he bore it for many years as a member of the Legislative Council of Bengal, which important

office he held both by appointment at the hands of successive Lieutenant-Governors and as the elected representative of his people. He is an old man, well over sixty years of age, whose journal has always warmly recognised the benefits his country has received from British rule. He has made his mistakes, but what leader of a great and just agitation, in which national and race questions are involved, but has erred in a similar fashion, at least in the eyes of his opponents? As lately as October 16, 1906, the *Times* admitted that Mr. Surendranath "has hitherto been reckoned amongst the Moderates." At the present moment he is captaining the Moderate Party against the foolish violence of the disloyal. He is held in the highest esteem by Bengalis of every class and by many Englishmen, but he has been the victim of silly misrepresentation. He is a religious man, and when he began his struggle against Partition his brother Brahmans performed a religious ceremony similar to the blessing that Christians invoke when they enter on any arduous undertaking. It included, as many Hindu rites do, the use of a chaplet of flowers, and this simple act was described, even in the House of Commons, as a kind of coronation! India has no son more worthy of the respect of every consistent Liberal than this sincere patriot and loyal subject of the King-Emperor. His chief sin is that he has asked for justice from the House of Commons in regard to the Partition of Bengal, and for that "supervision and criticism" which a Liberal Government ought to exercise.

Loyal and a Patriot.

CHAPTER III

THE COUNCIL OF INDIA AND MR. MORLEY'S REFORMS

"In providing that laws for India should be passed at a Council consisting not only of the ordinary members of the Executive Government but of additional members specially added for the purpose (of whom some have always been unofficial), it was the clear intention of Parliament that in the task of legislation the Government should, in addition to the sources of information usually open to it, be enlightened by the advice and knowledge of persons posessing other than official experience. Of these you were unfortunately deprived in discussing a subject in respect to which the assistance of non-official Councillors is of special value."—LORD SALISBURY, IN 1875, *being then Secretary of State for India.*

Enlightened by Non-official Experience.

THE original idea of Parliament in 1858, when it passed the Council of India Act, was that seven of its fifteen members should be non-official. It preserved this character for many years, but has steadily become more and more official. Recent appointments, which are described on the following page, have not given it a more independent character. Only two members, and they, it will be observed, the most distinguished in the

Independence Ousted.

body—Sir James L. Mackay, the Commercial Member, probably the greatest living authority on British trade in Asia, and the Financial Member, Sir Felix Schuster, a leading banker of the city of London—can be regarded as really non-official. The passage at the top of this chapter shows what an eminent Conservative statesman thought of the growing tendency in India to oust non-official members from the position of influence they should hold in legislation. The decrease of the non-official element in the Council of the Secretary of State is quite as injurious to good administration. In spite of Lord Salisbury's protest, it is still the constant practice to pass most important legislation at Simla, two or three days' journey away from Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, and the other chief towns where the non-official members reside. The legislation legalising the Partition of Bengal was passed at the Himalayan capital of the Viceroy, not one non-official member being present, whilst only a couple of months ago the great Coercion Enactment, known as the Seditious Meetings Act, similarly became law at Simla, only three non-official members having undertaken the long journey in order to record their votes against it. I wonder if the present Liberal Secretary of State has protested, as his great Conservative predecessor did, against reducing non-official representation to a comedy.

A Sympathetic Idea.

It was a just and liberal and sympathetic idea on Mr. Morley's part to introduce natives of India into his Council. When the Bill enabling him to do so was before Parliament at a midnight sitting in August, some members of

the Indian group endeavoured to introduce provisions to ensure that the gentlemen so appointed should be really representative of Indian opinion. The Secretary of State, however, rejected the advice, although his experience at the Irish Office might have reminded him that many gentlemen of pure Irish parentage and of the religion of the people are at the present day in no way representative of Irish opinion. Indeed, Irish Catholic officials have often been the most anti-Irish of the governing class. A similar fact is possible in India.

The two Indians that Mr. Morley has appointed to his Council are, I would venture to say, the least representative men he could find in the length and breadth of the Indian Empire. Mr. K. G. Gupta is the one Bengali Hindu of education who strongly supported Lord Curzon in his Partition of Bengal and is unpopular with the Hindus, whom he is supposed to represent. He has always been recognised as a very able public servant and has risen to high office, but he has never shown any independent appreciation of Indian questions. An official of officials, he represents nobody but the Government which he has served so faithfully.

A Merely Official Hindu.

The new Musalman member of the India Council, Mr. Bilgrami, is in some respects an even less satisfactory appointment. He has been for over thirty years an unimportant official in the service of the Nizam of Haidarabad, and is not a representative of British India at all, but found favour with Lord Curzon as the only

An Unrepresentative Musalman.

native of India who supported him in his assault on the educated class by his University Commission which, as we know from the *Quarterly Review*, "shook Babudom [Educated Hindu India] to its very foundations." The Musalmans of India generally live on terms of much kindliness with their Hindu neighbours, but there is a small clique, mostly of non-Indian descent, with its headquarters at Aligurh College, which of recent years has become actively hostile to Hindu progress. It has been compared to the Orange Society in Ireland, but is far less aggressive. Mr. Bilgrami has been regarded—possibly unjustly—as a leading spirit in this anti-Hindu coterie. There were, however, many far more distinguished Musalmans whom Mr. Morley might have chosen, such as Mr. Amir Ali, C.S.I., ex-Judge of the Calcutta High Court, or the Hon. Nawab Sayyid Muhamad, at present a member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, both very able, broad-minded men. There are dozens of other Musalmans of culture and great position who would have been acceptable to Indians of all religions.

Lord Curzon still Master.

Mr. Morley's third and last appointment to his Council is Sir Walter Lawrence who, as ex-private secretary to Lord Curzon and his most intimate friend, may be said to represent the Curzonian tradition in its entirety. No one of these three gentlemen has in the smallest degree the confidence of the Indian people. Indeed, quite the reverse. There is no question of the great ability and high character of Sir Walter Lawrence, and his *bonhomie* did very much to smooth over

the asperities of the late Viceroy, but his appointment has convinced the Indian public that finally and definitely the maintenance of Lord Curzon's *régime* continues the policy of the India Office and has now become the policy of its Liberal Secretary of State. There is no blinking the fact. Every grievance that the Indian people complained of during the seven years of Lord Curzon's viceroyalty is still in full force. Not one has been redressed, and Mr. Morley has chosen as his advisers men who are certain to use all their influence to work out the Curzon programme. The Liberal Government is in effect Lord Curzon's Executor.

Turning now to the so-called reforms, which Mr. Morley assured the House of Commons were of a really Liberal character, they display three leading characteristics:

Reactionary "Reforms."

(i) They diminish what little influence educated Indians had already obtained in the legislation of their country.

(ii) They secure to the large landlords or magnates, titled and untitled, predominance amongst Indian representatives; and

(iii) They give special favour to Musalman interests.

As to the origin of these "reforms," it is interesting to learn that last summer Lord Minto sent their reputed author, his Secretary in the Home Department, on a mission to the India Office. Sir Herbert Risley was for some years Lord Curzon's right-hand man and seemingly his guide in the latter part of his viceroyalty. He was certainly the moving spirit in bringing about the Partition

Their Origin.

of Bengal, Lord Curzon's culminating error. The Hindus now believe that Sir Herbert Risley is also the author of the new pro-Musalman policy, which, if persevered in, will infallibly bring trouble to Lord Minto's administration.

The New Law-makers.

The new constitution of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, as proposed in the recent minute of the Government of India, is as follows:

A.	Ex-officio, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal (or of the Punjab when the Council assembles in Simla), the Commander-in-Chief, and the Members of the Executive Council	8
B.	Additional officials to be nominated, not exceeding	20
C.	A Ruling Chief to be nominated by the Viceroy	1
D.	Elected members:—	
	(*a*) By the Chambers of Commerce of Calcutta and Bombay	2
	(*b*) By the non-official members of the Provincial Councils of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, Eastern Bengal and Assam, the United Provinces, the Punjab and Burma	7
	(*c*) By the nobles and the great landowners of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, Eastern Bengal and Assam, the United Provinces, the Punjab, and the Central Provinces	7
	(*d*) By Muhamadans	2
E.	Non-officials nominated by the Viceroy to represent minorities or special interests, not less than two to be Muhamadans	4
F.	Experts to be nominated by the Viceroy, when necessary, for special purposes	2
	Total, including His Excellency the Viceroy...	54

Sir Harvey Adamson, the Home Member of Council, echoing Mr. Morley's description of it in the House of Commons, claims for this rearranged

body the character of "a large and generous scheme of reform." As a matter of fact it is a scheme which can easily be used to block reform and, in reality, ousts progressive India from effective influence in the field of legislation. When first developed by Mr. Morley in his Budget speech, Reuter's agent in Calcutta, with an ever-ready desire to make things pleasant, telegraphed that the native Press described it as "farcical." The statement was untrue. Educated Indians immediately recognised the great ability of the "scheme," and that it might be a very destructive weapon against themselves. In their opinion—I merely record the fact, without endorsing it—its object, as the *Indian Review* acutely puts the argument, is to handicap "the only people prepared by education to meet their astute rulers on equal terms." This very capable periodical is for the most part written by graduates of the English Universities—certain M.A.'s of Oxford being prominent contributors—and its description of the "great Liberal reforms brought forward by a great Liberal statesman," though not quite fair, deserves serious consideration.

Exclude Progressive India.

"The whole," it declared, "is devised with a view—

"(i) To exclude, as far as possible, men who have the knowledge and independence of the present custodians of Indian interests on the Legislative Council.

"(ii) To create a Council with a large majority consisting of half-educated land magnates, whose insecurity of title will make them hang upon the lips of the official world; and

"(iii) Of Muhamadans, who will take delight in the sense of having crushed the educated Hindu in the fight for constitutional freedom."

Of the fifty-four members only seven, D(*b*), "elected by the non-official members of the Provincial Councils," or one-eighth part of the Viceroy's Council, can by any possibility represent the educated class, which alone has the experience and training that can fit men for political life and its highly intellectual contests. The "additional officials" (B) are three times more numerous, and educated India asks, Is this the first great Liberal Reform? The Government of India is the greatest landlord in Asia, and a hard one. It is to be helped by eight great landed magnates, including a "Ruling Chief." Who is to represent the two hundred millions of tenantry and peasants, who to protect them against rack-renting and rack-taxing? Is this the second great Liberal Reform?

What of the Peasantry?

The special membership of Muhamadans is of very doubtful policy, but it might be justified, if no other means existed for their representation. If the Hindu majority were bigoted and refused to elect Musalmans there would be great justification. But the contrary is the fact. Madras, which is overwhelmingly Hindu in population, is at present represented on the Viceroy's Council by Nawab Sayyid Muhamad, and some years ago Bombay, in which Hindus are equally predominant, was represented by Mr. R. Muhamad Sayani. The Hindus of Bengal confided their interests to Maulvi Sirajul Islam and to Mr. Sharfuddin. All these gentlemen were on the best terms with both Hindus and Musalmans, and represented both. The Indian Press fears that the special Musal-

Hindus Free from Bigotry.

man representation has been devised in order to introduce on the Council gentlemen of anti-Hindu proclivities—Indian Orangemen, in fact—and this would certainly not be a third great Liberal Reform. The appointments and honours conferred on the Nawab of Dacca and Mr. Bilgrami seem in Hindu eyes to lend much probability to this undesirable outlook. It was bad enough that the Government in Eastern Bengal was suspected of allying itself with Musalmans in order to break down Hindu opposition to Partition, but if the conviction grows throughout India that reliance on Musalman support in legislation is an Imperial policy, we are simply inviting discontent.

The matter is so delicate that it is advisable to state the fact—the warning—in the fewest words possible. Remember, the Sikhs are Hindus; the Gurkhas are Hindus; the Rajputs, the ancient warrior caste, are Hindus. The position is unpromising, and entirely of our own creating. Hope, however, lies in the wisdom of educated Musalmans. Their community includes many of the ablest and most patriotic men in our Eastern Empire, who are generally on friendly terms with Hindus, but anxiety attaches to the placeman or wire-puller and to ignorant, fanatical mobs. The Government may rely on Hindu support in every effort it may make to educate and improve the condition of the Musalman population. Hindus will welcome their appointment to their full share in administrative and judicial offices. Any attempt, however, to use this important community as a

A Warning.

political lever must fail. At least, its only success would be the bitter alienation of all classes of Hindus and the venal conciliation of the small class of Muhamadans who seek State employment.

Anti-British Musalmans.

A large body of Musalmans in India have long viewed our policy with extreme suspicion. It has been driven into their minds for many years back that England is the active enemy of Islam all the world over, from Afghanistan to Morocco. The charge is unjust and untrue, but they believe that the Sultan of Turkey, who to them is a political as well as a religious Pope, has protected himself from British designs by a German alliance. Only a month ago a remarkable letter appeared in the *Pioneer* from a Musalman gentleman, in which he warns us against an unfriendly propaganda amongst his co-religionists in India.

"There has arisen," he writes, "another class in our midst whose enthusiasm for their fellow-citizens of Egypt is of questionable kind. I have best reasons to believe that emissaries of Mustafa Kamel Pasha and his brood are touring in India to make converts among the Muhamadans of this country. The mushroom Anjumans (associations) that are heard of now and then are, in most cases, organisations created for the nefarious motive of the Egyptian seditionists. The guileless Muhamadans, who have no political sense, do not understand that they are becoming dupes of the political firebrands of Egypt."

The Only Wise Policy.

There is, in fact, a strong party amongst Musalmans which seems to bear England little affection. Mr. Muhamad Barkatullah, writing in the New York *Sun*, advocates close union with Hindus. He states that—

Present Discontents in India

"No stone has been left unturned lately by the British to create dissensions and quarrels between the two main branches of the Indian community, and in some cases success has crowned their efforts. The divine agencies, however, are working for the liberation of India. Since the Partition of Bengal, in October, 1905, the leaders of thought in India have directed their efforts toward bringing about union and fellow feeling between the Hindus and Moslems. There was consternation in the British camp when Hindus and Moslems were seen fraternising with each other. Lala Lajpat Rai has been a foremost worker for the union between the children of the soil without regard to race or religion. As a peacemaker and unifier he was deemed dangerous to British rule and hence deported to Mandalay."

It is a noticeable fact that the peasantry of Rawalpindi, for whom the six Hindu lawyers went to jail, are mostly Musalmans. The only wise policy for Mr. Morley is to avoid even the semblance of religious favouritism.

CHAPTER IV

LORD CURZON AND EDUCATED INDIA

The Disloyal Babu.

It is at the present time a commonplace for the English Press to write of educated Indians as disloyal, and this alleged fact is explained in various ways. Too much education and the rise of Japan are suggested by different ill-informed authorities as being the real stimuli of "sedition." It is rarely attributed to the real cause, viz., the repeated attacks made by Lord Curzon on the Babu, as the Indian gentleman of position and culture is nowadays briefly described. *Cet animal méchant se défend quand on l'attaque.*

Lord Curzon's Great Qualities.

It would be unfair to write or speak of Lord Curzon without a full recognition of his many great and attractive qualities, his eloquence, his industry, and his high ideal of justice in our courts of law. The acts which are condemned in the following pages were beyond doubt founded on a sincere belief in his policy as the best for the British Empire and the best for the people of India also. On his arrival in India Lord Curzon met with a very cordial reception, particularly from the princes, people, and Press of native India. His earlier speeches were full of kindliness, and foreshadowed a

sympathetic administration. He had visited India some ten years before as a tourist—a very industrious and observant one—and seems to have formed strong opinions on many questions that it would take a lifetime to assimilate. In carrying out these preconceived views he got at loggerheads, first with the high Indian officials, who were alarmed by his combined energy and inexperience. Several of the Secretaries to Government were removed and more complacent officials introduced. In fact, the new Viceroy seemed to regard the whole governing Civil Service in rather an uncomplimentary manner, and he set to work to bureaucratise it even more than it already was, and to stamp out any independence of opinion that it still possessed. This, however, was a small matter, and would probably have done no permanent injury either to the Civil Service or to India.

It was a very different matter when he fell foul of the people of the country, for he was soon at open merciless war with educated India. The first blow fell on Indian Calcutta. More than thirty years ago the metropolis of India received from Lord Northbrook a municipal constitution, administered by a Chairman appointed by the Crown, assisted by a Corporation of seventy-five members, two-thirds, or fifty, of whom were elected by the ratepayers, and one-third nominated by the Local Government. For a couple of years before Lord Curzon's arrival plague had been ravaging the Bombay Presidency, and it was considered desirable—very rightly—to strengthen the hands of the official Chairman and Executive of the Calcutta Municipality. A

Merciless War.

short enactment to effect this end was prepared by the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, with the approval of the Viceroy, Lord Elgin, no change in the constitution of the Corporation being contemplated. Without knowledge and against experienced advice, three months after he arrived in India, Lord Curzon reduced the number of the elected members from fifty to twenty-five, thereby giving the nominated element the majority. The principles of self-government which had been developed and matured by Lords Northbrook, Dufferin, Lansdowne and Elgin were uprooted by a stroke of the pen. Twenty-eight Indian members of the Corporation immediately resigned, mostly men of authority and education, honourable members of the Bengal Legislative Council, graduates of the English Universities, leading barristers and doctors and the representatives of the wealth of Calcutta, which, so far as its landlords go, is practically a Hindu town. For eight years past the capital of Bengal has been administered in an absolutely bureaucratic manner and with an entire disregard for the opinions of the ratepayers, landlords, merchants, and leading men of the Bengali nation. This unsympathetic system is still in force after two years of Liberal administration.

Lord Curzon had struck educated India at its heart. He had in preparation, however, a more effective blow. He attacked education itself. He appointed a Commission on University Education, the report of which, in the words of an admirer in the *Quarterly Review*, "shook Babudom to its very foundations." The recommenda-

Attacks Education.

tions of the Commission, of which Mr. Bilgrami, the recently appointed member of the Council of the Secretary of State, was an active member, may be summarised in a sentence. Its whole aim was to make education more expensive and less attainable by the youth of India, and to disaffiliate as many indigenous colleges as possible. Its most egregious proposal ran thus: "Fees must not be fixed so low as to tempt a poor student of but ordinary ability to follow a University course, which it is not to his real interest to undertake"! All India, Hindu and Musalman, rose up against such reactionary folly.

A great public meeting was held at the Town Hall of Calcutta to protest. I quote from the speeches of three of the principal speakers. The Hon. Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar, the foremost scientist in India, a member of the Legislative Council, and the most senior member of the Senate of the Calcutta University, used language which should appeal to every right-minded Englishman. Its loyalty is as conspicuous as its pathos:

"The Greatest Blessing."

"I have told you," he said, "often and often that we are enjoying under the rule of this nation more liberty, more freedom of thought and action, than we ever enjoyed under our own. But alas! that I should live to see this liberty ominously being threatened in a matter which has been the greatest blessing under British rule. Without imputing any motives to anybody, I cannot but observe, and it breaks my heart to do so, that the recommendations of the Commission seem to me to strike at the root of general education and to discourage the study of science."

The Hon. Narendra Nath Sen, another member of the Legislative Council, declared that—

"the matter under discussion to-day may, without exaggeration, be fitly described as one of life or death to the aspirations and progress of our countrymen. The recommendations of the Universities Commission mean death to countless aspirants after not only fame and fortune, but for very subsistence. They threaten the existence of more than half the colleges in India."

"A Matter of Life or Death."

Maulvi Abul Kasim, B.A., the delegate of the Muhamadan Association, denounced the wrong to the schools of his people thus:

"If these recommendations would seriously affect the progress of the Hindu boys, they would be ten times more injurious to the Moslem youth. Poverty, you have been told, gentlemen, is no crime, and it is an admitted fact that the Indian Musalmans are a very poor community; I may warn you, gentlemen, that if these recommendations are given effect to, it would be a death-blow to the spread of high education among the Musalmans and to Muhamadan progress in general."

To destroy self-government in Calcutta and hamstring education did not complete Lord Curzon's programme of reaction. He determined to make use of the public service as a means of harassment. Under Lords Dufferin and Lansdowne a wise system had been developed of obtaining junior officers for the subordinate Executive Service and the subordinate Judicial Service by competitive examinations, with the result that the deputy magistracies and many minor judgeships were being filled with Masters of Arts and Bachelors of Law—in fact, by some of the most distinguished graduates of the Indian Universities. Lord Curzon could not abide such a progressive

The Son of the Sycophant.

method of recruitment; so he knocked it all on the head and reverted to the old, bad, and degrading system of appointment by nomination. The son of the sycophant should in future be the magistrate or judge of India. This unwholesome policy is still in force after two years of Liberal administration.

I cannot give space to Lord Curzon's other acts of unwisdom, absolutely uncontrolled by the Conservative Government in England. He seems to have completely lost his balance. In February, 1905, as Chancellor of the Calcutta University, he made a speech on truthfulness, prefacing his address by the remark, "There are scores of people who pride themselves on never telling a falsehood and yet who are habitually false—false to others and false to themselves." The Indian Press did not apply this appreciation entirely to themselves. He then went on to assure his audience that he did not mean that "Asiatics deliberately or habitually deviate from the truth," but, "undoubtedly, truth took a high place in the moral codes of the West before it had been similarly honoured in the East, where craftiness and diplomatic wile have always been held in much repute." There was another blaze of indignation and a public meeting of protest at the Calcutta Town Hall. Lord Curzon came second best out of that embroglio.

The Untruthfulness of Asiatics.

At Simla he forgot himself so much as to remark that he was compelled to say that "wealthy native India has not yet reached a high standard of practical charity." If there is one virtue which the opulent Indian has, it is the most

Absence of Charity.

open-handed generosity towards the poor. The distribution of food and money to the destitute by men of even small wealth is the very commonest occurrence in Indian villages.

The Official Secrets Act is a good index to the *régime* Lord Curzon regarded as the best system of administration. I will only quote what the two most Conservative of Anglo-Indian newspapers thought of it. On the 11th of December, 1903, the *Pioneer* declared that it gave—

"Worthy of Russia."

"a power of coercion over the Indian Press which would be more worthy of a Government like that of Russia than of a British Indian administration presided over by such a distinguished statesman as the present Viceroy."

"Section 6 provides a special procedure to be adopted after the arrest of the person charged with an offence under the Bill. Instead of taking the person, as in the case of any ordinary criminal offender, before the nearest magistrate having jurisdiction in the case, the police *may* take or send the person *before the commanding officer* of the nearest military station. We stand amazed at the very audacity of such a proposal. Not only does the Bill violate the most elementary principle of criminal jurisprudence, as we have already pointed out, but in this latter provision it proposes to substitute for the ordinary magistracy of the country the jurisdiction of a military commander. We find it most difficult to treat such a proposal with patience or even seriously. Hitherto it has been the undisputed right of every man who has not voluntarily placed himself under military discipline to be brought before the civil power represented by the nearest magistrate. But as if the Government were determined to violate this right also, the military commander of the nearest military station, which may be ever so far distant, is to exercise jurisdiction in the first instance under this monstrous Bill."

In spite of every protest this Bill was passed into law by an official majority. The *Pioneer's* final comment supplies the explanation of Lord Curzon's hostility to educated men.

"Inward Instincts of an Oligarchy."

"The Bill," it wrote, "which was passed on the 4th instant (March, 1904) in the Imperial Legislative Council throws a curious light upon the native impulses and tendencies of an autocratic Government.

"The truth is that there is that about the Bill which appeals to the inward instincts of an oligarchy. It gives them the whip-hand over their critics and invests them with a power of coercion that can be applied whenever criticism promises to be inconvenient and annoying. The measure in the shape in which it has been made law practically forbids more than the mildest reference to any important civil or political matter until official sanction is given—by the publication of a communiqué or of papers bearing upon the subject—to freedom of comment in the Press."

The *Englishman* of Calcutta was not less outspoken, referring to the new law as—

A "Hateful Assault."

"the hateful assault on the peace of mind and liberty of every British subject in India, which is made by the Official Secrets Bill."

It did not trouble about its effect on native journalism, but added:

"The Bill has the appearance of being drawn up by some military man with a fine admiration for Russian methods and an absolute ignorance of British traditions of liberty and freedom."

This extraordinary law, which is unworthy of a

South American Republic, still, after two years of Liberal government, adorns the statute-book of India. In all things Indian the Liberal Party is the Executor of Lord Curzon's reactionary policy, and up to the present time it is nothing more.

CHAPTER V

THE PARTITION OF BENGAL

"It has been said, and unfortunately by an important person in India (Lord Curzon) that this demonstration of opposition in Bengal was 'machine-made opinion,' that it was the work of political wire-pullers and political agitators. I have often heard that kind of allegation made before. Governments are apt when an inconvenient storm of public opinion arises to lay it at the door of political wire-pullers and agitators. (Hear, hear.) There are, however, Indian officials of great weight and authority who entirely put aside that insinuation, and who argue that these Calcutta agitators would have had no response from the people they were appealing to, if there had not been in the minds of the people a distinct feeling that they were going to suffer a great wrong and inconvenience; and, although no doubt the agitators could form and disseminate these views, yet these sentiments and views existed quite independently of any wire-pulling or agitation. That is my own conclusion from reading the papers."—MR. MORLEY IN THE DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS, FEB. 26, 1906.

Mr. Morley Justifies Agitation.

THE English Press in India cannot at the present time inveigh too strongly against the Bengali people and their few friends in Parliament for condemning Partition. Yet it is the fact that these journals, English, Conservative and Imperialist as they all are, were the first to condemn

English Press strongly Condemns.

and the most outspoken in their condemnation of this very measure. Out of dozens of columns of hostile criticisms I have space for only a few extracts. The *Englishman* is the chief British organ in Calcutta, and on the 23rd of January, 1904, it wound up a vigorous article in these words, every one of which deserves consideration :—

"The Government can hardly be in very much doubt as to the popularity of its proposals to dismember the Province of Bengal, and especially those of them which refer to the transference of Dacca and Mymensingh to the Province of Assam. The proposals for Partition have been attacked in every key and every language. *They are repugnant alike to sentiment and to common sense. They are opposed by every community, and by every section of each community.* And within the threatened districts themselves they have awakened a storm of passionate protest which has surprised those who have led it. No still, small voice has been upraised on behalf of the Government. If it had, it would only have emphasised the deafening clamour of the protesting interests. Really, a casual observer might think that the Government had pondered over the best means of stirring up its subjects in Bengal, and had selected this as the quickest and most amusing manner of setting the Province in a ferment."

"Repugnant to every Community."

It referred to the "thunder of execration" aroused, and a month later declared that—

"Crushing Objections."

"Sir H. Cotton's objections, coming on the top of those of the High Court, are crushing and unanswerable. . . . The advocates of Partition, whose name is certainly not Legion, must find some other weapon than futile attempts to discredit the *bona fides* of their opponents."

The *Pioneer*, which is ordinarily the exponent of

the views of Government, in a temperate article on the 13th of January, 1904, after remarking that there might be some justification for annexing Chittagong to Assam, stated :—

"No Possible Advantage."

"The case is altogether different as regards the Dacca and Mymensingh districts. They can gain no possible advantage by being cut off from Bengal, and by the severance of the strong ties which bind them to Calcutta. They are both districts of importance, second to none in Bengal either in respect of education or wealth. Both of these districts have been subject to the administration of Bengal from Calcutta from the earliest days of the British occupation."

In 1896, when the suggestion of Partition was very severely condemned by the High Court, the *Pioneer* declared that: "If we British were a logical people and impatient of anomalies, the relief of the overworked government of the Lower Provinces would lie irresistibly in the separation of Bihar and Chhota Nagpur." This proper and workable solution is exactly what the peoples of Bengal and Bihar are prepared to accept. But what was "logical" and "irresistible" in 1896 became seditious in 1906!

Unstatesman like Resentment.

No more extraordinary change has ever taken place in politics than the fact that these journals now exhaust themselves in misrepresenting the men who attempt in the House of Commons to give voice to the arguments of the *Englishman* and *Pioneer* in 1904. The change, no doubt, is due to an unstatesmanlike resentment at the Bengali boycott of English goods—an unwise act, no doubt, but one that in no way justifies persistence in the

radically bad—to use the words of the High Court, the "retrograde and mischievous" policy of Partition.

The manner in which Partition was carried through has been so entirely opposed to all precedent that it is difficult to fix on its most unexpected feature. When a measure of such difficulty was being undertaken, it was only natural to expect that the Government of India would have placed the carrying out of its plans in the hands of high officials, who were thoroughly acquainted with the methods and circumstances of Bengal administration. The exact opposite was the line of conduct adopted. Lord Curzon appointed two non-Bengal civilians, Sir Andrew Fraser and Sir Bampfylde Fuller, to be Lieutenant-Governors of the two Bengals he was creating, although neither of them had served for one day in any part of the Province, and neither of them could speak a word of the language of Bengal. Lord Curzon knew beyond all doubt that practically the whole Civil Service of Bengal was hostile to his scheme. He consequently drove out Sir James Bourdillon, K.C.S.I., the experienced Bengal official, who acted as Lieutenant-Governor for a year, and then he reported to the Secretary of State, and through him to the Parliament of England, that the opinions of his two supporters, imported *ad hoc*, Sir Andrew Fraser and Sir Bampfylde Fuller, were the opinions of the Civil Service of Bengal.

"Ad Hoc" Lieutenant-Governors.

Bowdlerised Blue Books.

The Blue Books laid before Parliament in connection with the Partition have been bowdlerised in an unworthy manner. The reports of most dis-

tinguished Bengal officials, if hostile to Partition, have been omitted, and it is well known that a Minute condemning Partition by an ex-President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, a leading merchant of Calcutta, similarly found its way to the waste-paper basket.

In 1896 the question of Partition was raised by Sir Charles Elliot, a Lieutenant-Governor who, before his appointment to that office, had never served for a day in the Province. It was he who, in his inexperience, started the idea of separating a portion of Eastern Bengal and uniting it to Assam. The proposal was received with general condemnation and dropped. Amongst the authorities consulted was the High Court of Calcutta. Its opinion was decisive and practically killed the proposal. "The judges apprehend," they wrote, "that what is required of them is an expression of their opinion as to how the change, if carried out, would affect the administration of civil and criminal justice," the most important of all objects of administration. "The proposal seems to the judges to be a step in the wrong direction. To transfer districts which, ever since the East India Company assumed the administration, have formed a part of the regulation territory, cannot but appear in the light of a retrograde movement." "It seems to the judges, therefore, that a transfer of the Chittagong division to the Government of Assam as at present constituted, would not fail to be a retrograde and mischievous step." This outspoken condemnation had a very striking effect in after years.

Opinion of the High Court

"Retrograde and Mischievous."

When Lord Curzon took up the Partition of Bengal, though he consulted everybody and every authority, from European merchants to Musalman societies, he very wisely abstained from asking the High Court what it thought of his "retrograde and mischievous" action. He did not want his pet project to be again described in this accurate, curt, and contemptuous fashion.

The following translation of "Bande Mataram," the striking national hymn of the Bengalis, written some thirty years ago, may be accepted as sufficient evidence of the intense national feeling, which Lord Curzon recklessly outraged for the sake, as he explained, of "administrative convenience":—

Intense National Feeling

"My Motherland I sing,
Her splendid streams, her glorious trees,
The zephyr from the far-off Vindyan heights,
Her fields of waving corn,
The rapturous radiance of her moonlit nights,
The trees in flower that flame afar,
The smiling days that sweetly vocal are,
The happy, blessed Motherland!
Her will by seventy million throats extolled,
Her power twice seventy million arms uphold;
Her strength let no man scorn.
Thou art my head, thou art my heart,
My life and soul art thou,
My song, my worship and my art,
Before thy feet I bow,
As Durga, scourge of all thy foes,
As Lakshmi, bowered in the flower,
That in the water grows,
As Bani, wisdom, power;
The source of all our might,

Our every temple doth thy form unfold—
Unequalled, tender, happy, pure,
Of splendid streams, of glorious trees,
My Motherland I sing,
The stainless charms that e'er endure,
And verdant banks and wholesome breeze,
That with her praises ring."

Except perhaps Oudh, Bengal is the oldest Hindu kingdom, which still retained under British rule its ancient geographical boundaries. The Musalman respected these time-honoured ethnic frontiers, and it has been left to an unsympathetic Englishman to at last invade their old-world memories. The civilisation of Bengal was the highest in India before the Musalman Conquest, —indeed before the advent of the Saxon to Great Britain. Two thousand years ago her schools of philosophy rivalled the teachings of the Greek doctors of mental science. Her political system centred round four great cities—Gaur, Bikrampur, Navadwip and Mahasthan or Barendri. Gaur had over a million of inhabitants in the early centuries of the Christian era. Her great temples of carved stone afterwards formed the quarry from which the Musalmans built the Medina Mosque, their largest architectural effort in Bengal. The ruins of Mahasthan cover a quadrangle seven miles across. The vast reservoirs of the Pal Kings are famous, one measuring a mile in length, half a mile in width, and forty feet in depth.

The Oldest Hindu Kingdom.

On the 16th of last October, as on the same date in the two preceding years, the people of Bengal

kept the anniversary of the great wrong that has been done them. In Calcutta and in all the large towns of the Province they came together in public meeting, fasting and barefooted, dressed in mourning garments, and thence proceeded to their temples to take the following oath :—

National Mourning.

"Whereas the Government has thought fit to effectuate the Partition of Bengal in spite of the universal protest of the Bengali nation, we hereby pledge and proclaim that we as a people shall do everything in our power to counteract the evil effects of the dismemberment of our Province, and to maintain the integrity of our race. So may God help us!"

These are facts that can hardly please any right-minded Englishman. They should be gall and wormwood to an honest Liberal.

A very singular thing about this extraordinary measure is that the Secretary of State for India has never ventured to say one word in its favour. On the contrary, on the very first occasion on which he addressed the House of Commons, Mr. Morley declared that "it was, *and remains*, undoubtedly an administrative operation, which went wholly and decisively against the wishes of most of the people concerned." The entire history of this measure is replete with incidents of an unprecedented kind. Perhaps the most noticeable is that it was forced through by a flagrant act of contempt for the House of Commons. In August, 1905, the question of Partition was brought before the

Mr. Morley's Condemnation.

House of Commons by Mr. Herbert Roberts, M.P., and on Sir Henry Fowler, an ex-Secretary of State for India, complaining that the House was entirely without knowledge of the facts, the then Secretary of State, Mr. Brodrick, pledged himself that it would not be given effect to till all the papers relating to it had been laid before Parliament. This pledge was broken within two months, and the legislation in India necessary for the enforcement of Partition was carried through at Simla at a hole-and-corner meeting of Lord Curzon and the official members of the Legislative Council, at which not a single Indian member was present. It is hard to understand how any member of Parliament, even a Conservative, can condone such treatment of both the Indian and English Legislatures. Lord Curzon, in the omnipotence of his viceregal power, treated both with equal indignity and the Liberal Party submits without a syllable of protest.

Lord Curzon's Contempt for Parliament.

Partition was forced through, although Sir Bampfylde Fuller, whom Lord Curzon afterwards chose as Lieutenant-Governor, condemned it in these words:—

Sir B. Fuller tells the Truth.

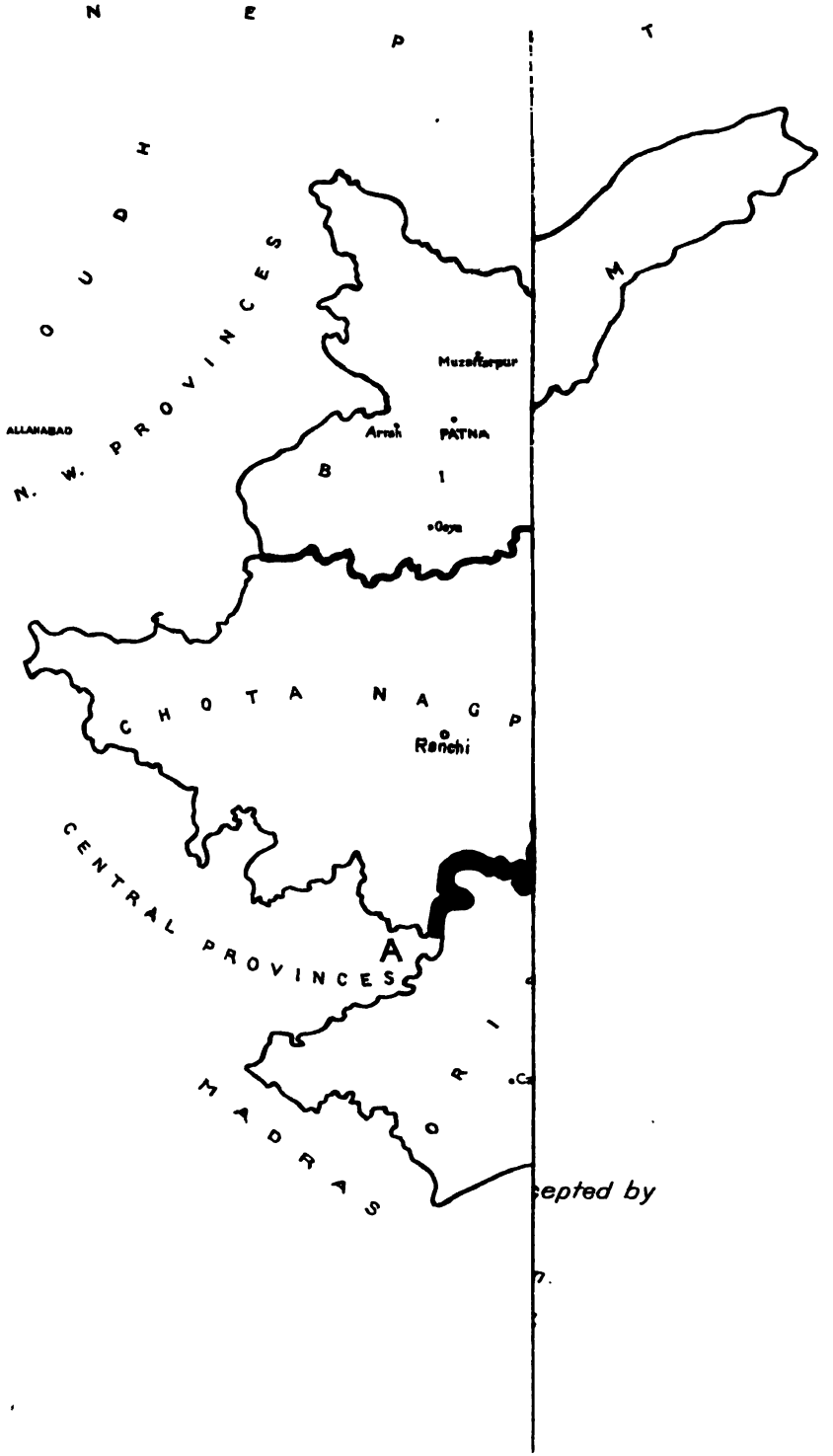
"Indian opinion in the Assam Valley is greatly opposed to the project. The town of Dacca is difficult of access from the Assam Valley, and no development of railway communications, which is in present contemplation, seems likely to bring Dacca as near to it as Shillong is at present. There is no community of feeling between the Assamese and the people of these districts—indeed, it is hardly too much to say that they are strongly antipathetic."

In other words, Lord Curzon rent ancient homo-

geneous Bengal in twain in order to link together two "antipathetic" peoples in an ill-assorted union, although, in Mr. Morley's words, they were both "wholly and decisively" hostile to it. I must say that I sincerely sympathise with Sir Bampfylde Fuller. He loyally undertook the foolish task laid upon him. Partition naturally led to passionate protest, and he then found it necessary to carry out the second part of his instructions from Simla—"to hammer the Bengalis," as he is said to have succinctly described the policy, of which he was the instrument.

The Civil Service Hostile.

That the people of Bengal detested the Partition there is no manner of doubt, but a fact that has been concealed from the English Parliament and people is that the great mass of officials in Bengal condemned it as the most unsuitable possible for the Province, as injurious to British administration and as financially wasteful. I myself have received letters from many of my brother Bengal civilians, some of them men of the highest rank. I have discussed it with as many more, and I never knew one who did not condemn the new boundary which Lord Curzon introduced as administratively—that is, from the English standpoint—bad. I met at the India Office an ex-Lieutenant-Governor who had gone there expressly to protest. There are now in England four ex-Lieutenant-Governors of Bengal, ex-members of the Bengal Civil Service, and during their terms of office every one of them has left on record opinions, not unfavourable to Lord Curzon's scheme, for nothing so inept had ever been dreamt


N E P T
O U D H
N. W. PROVINCES
ALLAHABAD
Muzaffarpur
Arrah
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of, but strongly in favour of the Partition which the Bengali people are prepared to accept. There are half a dozen or more big files of reports and correspondence in the record-rooms of the Bengal Office on the subject of Partition, and they all reject anything like Lord Curzon's solution. It is probably the knowledge of this fact that makes the very thought of inquiry so distasteful to the Government of India.

The Acceptable Partition.

A partition of Bengal is a perfectly reasonable and defensible measure. It has been spoken of as an executive necessity for half a century. The breaking up of this great administrative unit has always been regarded as one of much simplicity, because Bengal—or to use its more correct name, the Lower Provinces of Bengal—consists of five sub-provinces, each with its own distinctive racial and physical characteristics. They are as follows, with their areas and populations at last census. The map on the opposite page will further elucidate their inter-connection. It shows by a blue line the partition which the people of Bengal are prepared to accept and which (this is the all-important fact of the whole controversy) the Government and Civil Service of Bengal have always approved :—

THE LOWER PROVINCES OF BENGAL.

	Area. Sq. Miles.	Population.
Bengal Proper	79,068	42,943,325
Orissa	9,841	4,343,150
Assam	52,959	5,841,878
Total	141,868	53,128,353

	Area. Sq. Miles.	Population.
Bihar	35,532	21,547,538
Chhota Nagpur	32,433	6,710,116
Total	67,965	28,257,654

Bengal Proper is ancient Bengal, and it is the bone of contention. Lord Curzon cut it in two, allocating 25 millions of its population to Eastern Bengal and leaving 18 millions under the Calcutta administration.

The greatest of all the arguments in favour of the Bihar solution is that it breaks no racial ties and recognises ethnical and linguistic frontiers that have existed from the dawn of history, and which even the Musalman conquerors never disturbed. To the right or east of the blue line, A, B, C, D, lie Bengal, Orissa, and Assam. The languages of the two latter sub-Provinces are dialects of Bengali, an elder daughter of Sanscrit, whilst to the left or west Hindi is the almost universal speech, and its vocabulary is as much Persian as Indian. One is a synthetic, the other an analytic tongue. The Behari and the Bengali are more widely different than the Celt and the Teuton in race origin, in language, in marriage customs, in forms of land tenure, and even in food, the Behari being a wheat or bread eater, whilst the Bengali's staple diet is boiled rice. Lord Curzon probably knew little about these facts.

The Ethnic Frontier.

Dacca, the new capital, is a minor town of only 90,542 inhabitants, situated in the midst of mighty rivers and vast swamps. It is most difficult of approach and most unhealthy, cholera having found

more European victims there than in any other town in Bengal. It is the terminus of only one puny railway, some seventy miles long. Turning to the popular partition, which had the highest official approval till Lord Curzon came to upset everything, one finds in Patna, the headquarters of the proposed Bihar-Chhota Nagpur Province, an ancient city, the capital of all India in the centuries before Christ, with a population of 165,192, the second largest city in the Lower Provinces. Patna is the terminus of five great railways, which spread out all over the Empire. It is healthy, and most easy of approach.

An Undesirable Capital.

Liberals are probably unaware that it is the Administration which they placed in power that is now regarded with the bitterest feelings by the Bengali nation. The Partition took effect on October 16, 1905, and meetings of protest were held all over Bengal. The noblest as well as the most educated of the Bengali race took a prominent part. At a monster meeting held in the Town Hall of Calcutta, under the presidency of the Maharaja of Cossimbazar, the resolution condemning it was proposed by the Maharaja of Mymensingh and seconded by Raja Peari Mohun Mukherjea. But it soon became apparent that a change of Ministry in England was imminent. Tory support would soon be withdrawn from Lord Curzon's offensive act. The Bengali Press teemed with articles prophesying Liberal victory, and when the victory was won and, on December 5, 1905, Mr. John Morley became Secretary of State for India, jubilation is the only word to

A Misplaced Trust.

express the joy of the people. Every journal cried out, "Now at last, after seven weary years of misgovernment, shall we get justice." Agitation and boycott both collapsed. During the three months to the beginning of March, 1906, hardly a single public meeting was held. Their English friends assured the Bengali leaders that the Liberal Party was brimming over with the principles of justice, and that they were certain of a fair, dispassionate, if not a kindly hearing! We advised patience and the avoidance of agitation. We knew little of the ways of politicians and the art of shelving difficult questions. The officials of the India Office were more *rusés*, and when Mr. Morley came to deal with the subject he informed the House of Commons that there had been a "great subsidence in feeling" in regard to Partition in Bengal. The statement was inaccurate. There had been no change in feeling, but a "great subsidence" in agitation, due to the restraining influence of Anglo-Indian members of Parliament, and especially to a sincere trust in the Liberal Party. Has that trust, that confidence in Liberal professions, been misplaced? Time alone can tell, but if it has been betrayed it will form one of the least honourable pages in the history of the Party of Progress in England.

CHAPTER VI

THE MUSALMANS AND PARTITION

THE favourite, almost the only, argument of those who defend Lord Curzon's Partition of Bengal is that it is desired by the Musalmans of that Province. The statement is an absolute perversion of fact, but may I ask since when has it become a part of the policy of the British people to subdivide our possessions according to the religious tenets of their inhabitants? At least, when did it become part of Liberal policy to maintain or advocate such a reactionary principle of administration? It is quite true that it seemed to form the ideal of Lord Curzon. The Hon. Mr. Chaudhuri, M.A., LL.B., Camb., an ex-member of the Legislative Council of Bengal, describes this legacy of the late Viceroy as the root evil of the whole position. He, like all Hindus, not only in Bengal but in India generally, believes that the main object of "the Curzon policy" was

A Sectarian Policy.

"to drive the wedge between Hindu and Muhamadan. Lord Curzon apparently took the Vambéry view that India could only be held on the basis of racial animosity. He feared that a *rapprochement* between Hindu and Muhamadan would be fatal,

for underneath the old antagonism there was developing a sort of political unity. The whole Curzon official attitude is directed to feeding the racial fires. That is the reason for the Partition of Bengal—to carve a Muhamadan State out of one which, as a whole, was Hindu; to set up in Dacca a rival Muhamadan centre to the Hindu centre of Calcutta. The idea runs through all the Curzon tradition. Foster Muhamadanism at the expense of Hinduism. Where Muhamadanism is weak, the rights of the minority must be sustained; where it is strong, the rule of the majority must prevail."

Lord Curzon has very recently written to the Press to deny this view of his policy, and I believe that he did not himself understand the full meaning of his action. His chief officials, however, were under no misapprehension, as the following letter from Sir Herbert Risley, the Home Secretary, dated September 13, 1904, abundantly proves:—

Fostering Disunion.

"The boundary suggested," he wrote in defending the Partition, "would bring within the Eastern Province the bulk of the characteristic Muhamadans of Bengal, who form 78 per cent. of the population in Rajshahi, 50 per cent. in Dinajpur, and 48 per cent. in Malda. Not only would it give Dacca a central position in relation to the rest of the new Province, but it would tend, in course of time, to confer on that city the special character of a provincial capital, where Muhamadan interests would be strongly represented, if not predominant" (Blue Book, Cd. 2746, p. 203).

This fatal policy is still in full force at Simla and is the mainspring of the "reforms" attributed to Mr. Morley, but which are entirely the work of the officials whom Lord Curzon left behind him in India, holding the highest and most influential positions in

the Supreme Government. It has had a temporary success and led to serious rioting in Eastern Bengal, but already Hindus and Musalmans are remembering that they are brethren of the same race, and intelligent men of both religions look forward to a great development of their common country under the ægis of the British Crown.

The sole supporter of Partition amongst Musalmans holding a prominent position in Bengal is Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, who certainly could not be described as a personage of special influence in his community before he took an active part in advocating this measure. He is not a member of the old Musalman nobility of the Province, being, in fact, the grandson of a very worthy merchant who amassed a considerable fortune, which he invested successfully in landed property near Dacca. This founder of the family was regarded with affection by the Hindus. He was very munificent and established hospitals and other charitable institutions, for which public services he was very properly awarded a title. The present Nawab probably perceives that if Dacca becomes the capital of a new provincial government the enhanced value to his estate will be very appreciable. At present he is not in affluent circumstances, and the Government of India recently granted him a loan of £20,000. It also nominated him to the Viceroy's Legislative Council, as well as to the local council. It is difficult to deny that his chief claim to these distinctions is that he has been a thick and thin supporter of the hated policy of Partition.

The Sole Supporter.

The Partition of Bengal was from the outset condemned by all that was best, most noble and most educated amongst the Musalmans of Bengal. As proof I would quote the protest addressed to the Government of Bengal by Nawab Sayyid Amir Hosain, C.I.E., Hon. Secretary of the Central Musalman Association, Calcutta, on March 1, 1904, in these words:—

Educated Musalmans Condemn.

"The Committee of the Muhamadan Association, which has its branches all over Bengal, are not in favour of any change in the territorial limits of that Province. My Committee are of opinion that no portion of the Bengali-speaking race should be separated from Bengal without the clearest necessity for such separation, and they think such necessity does not exist. . . . One of the arguments for not transferring Orissa from Bengal, as stated in Mr. Risley's (the Home Secretary) letter, is that the prescription of a century is difficult to break, and I beg to point out that it is still more difficult to break the prescription of many centuries."

The old Musalman nobility of Bengal are keenly proud of the greatness of their ancient Province. It is important to note that the largest meeting of protest at Calcutta against Partition had for its chairman the Hon. Muhamad Yusuf Khan Bahadur, a member of the Legislative Council, a Fellow of the Calcutta University and President of the Central Muhamadan Association. His Highness the Nawab Bahadur of Murshidabad, the premier nobleman of Bengal and lineal descendant of the Musalman governors who administered Bengal on behalf of the Moghul, recalled the very recent days when "Hindus and

Musalman Nobility Resent.

Musalmans were all brothers together." Amongst those who most strongly condemned disruption were the Hon. Nawab Sayyid Muhamad, at present Musalman representative on the Viceroy's Legislative Council, and His Highness the Aga Khan, the President of the great Muhamadan deputation to Lord Minto in October, 1906, who said "he was opposed to the Partition from the beginning, and recent events had not induced him to modify his views." He allowed it to be stated that "any reference in support of Partition would have precluded His Highness from joining the deputation." This deputation laid before Lord Minto the grievances and wishes of the Musalman community, and if that community desired the Partition of Bengal, then was its opportunity. It not only never mentioned Partition but it did more. It was understood to have discouraged the Nawab of Dacca, who was absent, from joining the deputation on account of his action in regard to Partition. This whole fable of Musalman approval of the Partition is a misstatement of official origin.

A Seditious Meetings Act has just passed the Legislative Council of Lord Minto. A circumstance that should arrest attention is the fact that out of the hundreds of districts in India it has been immediately applied only to one, the district of Bakhargunj in Eastern Bengal, in which, according to the last census (1901) 68 per cent. are Musalmans, and the capital of which, Burisal, is the headquarters of the opposition to Partition. In that district the Hindus and Musal-

Musalman Peasantry Hostile.

mans, all peasants, are on the best terms, and the leader of the latter, Maulvi Liakat Husain, is at present in jail for "sedition."

Mr. Morley stated last July in the House of Commons that "the situation in Eastern Bengal was strained owing to the bitterness existing between Hindus and Muhamadans consequent on the attempts to compel Muhamadans by violence to abstain from purchasing foreign goods." This statement, which the Secretary of State no doubt obtained from official sources, is absolutely without foundation. Three magistrates were employed to dispose of the criminal cases arising out of these riots—two members of the Indian Civil Service, Mr. Beatson-Bell and Mr. Barniville—the third being a Musalman. After trying some dozens of cases and imprisoning some hundreds of Musalmans, they unanimously found that "the boycott" of English goods "is not the cause of the disturbances," the Musalman magistrate, with honourable impartiality, declaring that "there was not the least provocation for rioting." "The evidence adduced," he stated in one of his judgments, "shows that at about 4 or 5 p.m. on the date in question the accused, Habil Sarkar, had read over a notice to a crowd of Musalmans near the shop of Ramani Saha at Dewanganj, and had told them that the Government and the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca have passed orders to the effect that nobody would be punished for plundering and oppressing the Hindus. Soon after the Kali's image [the statue of a goddess in a Hindu temple] was broken by the Musalmans; the shops of the

Causes of Riot.

Hindu traders were also plundered. In some of the shops fire was set to some heaps of papers by the Musalmans for the purpose of searching the shops of the Hindus by the light of the fire. . . . In my opinion the witnesses do not make any false statements in their evidence." Mr. Barniville, C.S., the Sub-divisional Officer of Jamalpur, in his report on the Melanda Hat riots, finds "that some Musalmans proclaimed by beat of drum that the Government had permitted them to loot the Hindus." In the Hargilchar abduction case against Jani Shaikh and others, Mr. Barniville, in committing the accused persons, remarked "that these outrages were due to the announcement that the Government had permitted the Muhamadans to marry Hindu widows in nika form"—that is, as second wives or concubines.

The real cause of the riots was undoubtedly the incitements of Mullahs coming from Dacca in March and April, 1907, well supplied with funds. At the same time an inflammatory booklet, known as the Red Pamphlet, was distributed widely. It used every argument that could excite religious passion. It represented the Hindus as "inhuman oppressors" who "have robbed us of honour and wealth," "who degrade us and deprive us of bread. Now they are going to deprive us of very life." The author, a poor man, was identified and confessed his guilt, but he was in no way punished—rightly, perhaps, as he was certainly only the ignorant agent of some person of higher rank.

Incitements of Mullahs.

Another chief source of trouble was unquestionably a belief amongst the Musalmans that they had the

local Government at their back The first act of folly was the presence of the two members of the Board of Revenue, next to the Lieutenant-Governor the highest officials in the Province, at the foundation in Dacca in October, 1905, of a Musalman association "to represent Muhamadan views and aspirations in matters social and political." Their action was in disregard of the express orders of Government to all officials to avoid political agitation. Hardly less unwise was the open advertisement in the *Government Gazette* for Musalmans to fill certain appointments. The Chief Secretary issued formal instructions to all officers to encourage the selection of candidates of their faith. The Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals advertised for "Musalmans or non-Bengalis"! The Police Department acted on the same principle in recruiting constables. It seemed, indeed, as if the millennium for Muhamadans was approaching in Eastern Bengal. The misguided men not unnaturally lost their balance and found themselves in jail—several hundreds of them. Such was the natural result of a thoughtless interpretation of Sir Bampfylde Fuller's innocent but unwise simile when he spoke of the Musalman community as his "favourite wife."

Official Partisans.

The Musalmans of Eastern Bengal need all the consideration of a wise administration. I have spent half a dozen years amongst them. They are converts from the very lowest castes of Hindus and extremely ignorant. They have long lived on the best terms with their Hindu neighbours, who form the landholding, merchant,

Ill-will Unknown.

schoolmaster, and generally educated and wealthy class. They always shared in Hindu festivals, and ill-will was unknown till Partition came to destroy friendship and social order.

CHAPTER VII

BAITING THE BENGALI

THOSE who like the Bengalis best deplore the fact that a few of them have recently been unwise and violent in word and act, but they have been cruelly provoked. They certainly were not the first to transgress the bounds of moderation. For two years their agitation was conducted with singular good sense. Their meetings were uniformly orderly and their speeches invariably loyal to the King-Emperor, even when most hostile to the local administration. It was not till after a temple was desecrated and their women outraged that a really seditious spirit began to dominate a portion of the Bengali Press.

Cruelly Provoked.

Dr. Lefroy, the English Bishop of Lahore, as became a dignitary of a Christian Church, protested last August against the offensive language in which the English Press in India has recently written of the educated class of Indians. "Those of us," he said, "who are, or have been, at all closely in touch with the class in question know for ourselves with perfect certainty that they are very far indeed from being disloyal; but we know, too, that the strain which is being put on their

A Bishop's Warning

loyalty at the present time by language of the kind to which I refer, and its inevitable effect in wounding and alienating them is very great indeed." Mr. Morley, at Arbroath in October, recalling the well-known statement that "No one ever ate at Sir Henry Lawrence's table without learning to think more kindly of the natives," added: "India is perhaps the one country—bad and overbearing manners are very disagreeable in all countries—India is the only country where bad and overbearing manners are a political crime." About the same time the *Standard*, the London Conservative journal, said: "If we could infuse an atmosphere of better manners into the English community as a whole, we would do more to strengthen the bonds that unite the mass of the people to us than by any enlargements of the Legislative Councils."

The practice of speaking and writing disparagingly of the people of India is an old sin of a certain undesirable class of Englishmen. The great Warren Hastings, who spent many years of his life in Bengal, protested against it a hundred years ago in these words:—

Warren Hastings's Protest.

"I affirm that this description of them [that the people of India were in a state of moral turpitude] is untrue and wholly unfounded. They are gentle, benevolent, more susceptible to gratitude for kindness shown them than prompted to vengeance for wrongs inflicted, and as exempt from the worst properties of human passion as any people on the face of the earth."

Sir John Malcolm bore testimony to the fact that "the people of India are brave, generous, and humane, and their truth is as remarkable as their

courage." Another great Indian administrator, Sir Thomas Munro, records:—

"The general practice of hospitality and charity amongst them, and above all a treatment of the female sex full of confidence, respect, and delicacy, are signs which denote a civilised people. The Hindus are not inferior to the nations of Europe, and if civilisation is to become an article of trade between the two countries, I am convinced that this country will gain by the import of cargo."

These were the men who built up the great Empire that some of their descendants seem inclined to deface. There are still many such Englishmen in India, and it is they, and not the ill-mannered Imperialists, who still maintain the name of England as a symbol of justice and humanity.

I would not quote the following passages but that they have, unhappily, appeared widely in the Indian Press, both English and vernacular. In fact, I have taken them as cuttings out of Indian journals. A retired Madras official recently published a book entitled "India and its Problems." The following extract from it has gone the round of the native Press:—

Disgraceful Libels.

"In this [Hindu] faith there is an absolute divorce between religion and morality. Modesty, as we understand it, the Hindus know not. Their religion does not limit a married man to exterior decency, to say nothing of conjugal fidelity. The native conception of the relation of the sexes is merely animal. Love in the sense which it bears in the Western world is unknown in Hindu life."

I am glad to say that Indian journals also reproduced the admirable comment of the *Saturday Review*, that—

"It is an astonishing thing that the author's years of residence in India have not given him a better insight into the true character of a people who are singularly rich in domestic virtues, gentle and humane in their social relations, and pre-eminent in their filial piety."

The best and the most Christian comment, however, is that of the *Bengali:* "Father! forgive him, for he knows not what he says."

Vituperation by the "Times."

It is particularly, however, on the heads of the Bengalis that the storm of vituperation has burst. I will not quote minor journals. The *Times* has been prominent in these attacks, and I would ask this leading journal to remember that it injures not only itself by the violence of its political articles, but that it does an almost irremediable wrong to the British Empire when it insults the religions and the womenfolk of subject peoples. In an article of the *Times* of the 13th of last September, entitled "The Well Springs of Sedition in India," it wrote: "If we want to understand the true significance of the political movement it is necessary to study the religious and moral atmosphere in which it is developed." It then goes on to refer to Mr. J. C. Oman's recent book on the chief religions of India, and arrives at the conclusion that the motive power behind the Bengali leaders who oppose the partition of their country is to be sought in "the ancient and grim superstitions of their race and the demoralising tyranny of Indian social laws." It next proceeds in its literary supplement of the same date to quote largely from Mr. Oman's work, the quotations being the most offensive to

Hindus that can be found in the volume. I will not defile my pages by reproducing their uncleanness; it is enough to say that they describe the religion of the Bengali Hindus as generally obscene, and that at their chief festivals they "abandon themselves with the sensuality of their race" to "licentiousness and lewdness"—a statement which I know, after fifteen years lived amongst them, to be shamelessly false.

Another London Conservative journal of great authority allows itself to write of the Bengali leaders in the following style: "Among recent writers on India, one after another testifies to the fact that the more bloody, sensual, and degraded aspects of Hinduism flourish particularly in Bengal, on behalf of which such extravagant pretensions to the hegemony of an unwilling and unfriendly India are put forward with such confidence by the Congress Party, which draws from that province its intellectual, and probably its pecuniary, strength." I am glad to say that the *Pioneer*, the principal English journal in India, points out that the majority of the leaders in Indian agitation are members of the Theistic societies, "whose ethics are singularly like those of the Christian religion, which the founders of these sects have carefully studied." The editor of the most seditious journal in Calcutta was a Catholic and for a time a missionary of that faith. He recently died in prison.

Abuse of Indian Leaders.

The *Times* has outdone even its own folly in attempting to defend the outrages on Hindus in Eastern Bengal by referring to the very numerous victims of rape as "a small number of young

Hindu widows, who willingly acceded to abduction to escape the degradation to which their own creed subjects them." The word "willingly" covers an intolerable charge, and its answer has come back hot and fierce from Calcutta in the following tirade of the Hindu newspaper with the largest circulation in India :—

An "Infamous" Insult.

"Not satisfied with having thrown dirt at the religion of the Hindus, the *Times* publishes an infamous libel on the character of Hindu widows, which has been republished in a still more offensive form by a disreputable Anglo-Indian journal here. No Indian, whether Hindu or Muhamadan, likes the name of his womenfolk to be taken in vain by profane tongues, and will never tolerate their being slandered by foul-mouthed journalists. We ask the jackals of the British and Anglo-British Press to put a curb on their tongues, otherwise they may rouse dangerous passions in our people. Go on with your miserable trade of lying and slandering, we will soon learn to treat your libels with such contempt as they deserve; but spare our religion and womankind. Even your wretched methods of political controversy need not take you on to such delicate ground."

As a matter of fact her celibacy is the glory of a Hindu widow.

I would not trouble my readers with all this mad folly, but I have lived over a quarter of a century in India, and I warn the English people that if the attitude towards Hinduism adopted by the *Times* and other journals is not utterly repudiated by all Englishmen, whether connected with the Government or not, we shall be brought face to face with a passion of anger that will shake this Empire to its foundations. It is the most pressing danger in India to-day.

The Gravest Danger of To-day.

Another form of insult to the Bengalis is to speak of them as "feeble, cowardly, wanting in manly vigour," &c. A most respected evening London Conservative journal recently asserted that "the Bengali is an object of contempt and hatred to the more virile races." This is entirely inaccurate. Bengalis hold positions of influence and authority at the courts of most of the Indian princes, and this is one of the many facts that render the outraging of Bengali feeling a grave political danger, Hindus throughout the whole of India sympathise with them. Sir Sayyid Ahmad, the most distinguished Musalman India produced last century, said in 1884 at Lahore:—

The Bengali at Football.

> "I assure you that the Bengalis are the only people in our country whom we can properly be proud of, and it is only due to them that knowledge, liberty, and patriotism are progressing in our country. I can truly say that they are the head and crown of all the communities of Hindustan."

As to want of manliness, I have known a team of young Bengali gentlemen at Calcutta defeat the team of a British regiment at football. Last year the Bengali Athletic Club met the English Football Club at the same game and again won the match. Young Bengalis during the recent agitation have acted often foolishly and violently, but they certainly did not show want of courage. Their conduct has been justly blamed, but it is very doubtful if the young men of any nation would have behaved more peacefully when, not to mention outrages on their religion and women, they believed that the honour and the integrity of their nation were assailed.

CHAPTER VIII

A REAL HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

ENGLAND has done two great things for India. It has maintained peace and it has given her justice, and of these two benefits the latter is the greater. Justice is the corner-stone of the arch in Indian Government. That the High Court of Calcutta still maintains the highest ideals of even-handed justice will be seen from the following notes on five cases supplied to me by Mr. H. E. A. Cotton, of Lincoln's Inn, Barrister-at-Law and Advocate of the High Court at Calcutta.

Even-handed Justice.

(i) Knowing how intense was the feeling in Eastern Bengal against Partition, the most elementary statesmanship would have suggested patience in dealing with a people who were, not unnaturally, irritated. It would have been wise to give them some opportunities of petitioning and appealing, so long as order was maintained. Sir Bampfylde Fuller, unfortunately, took an opposite view, and more unfortunately the officials under his government employed means, which were clearly illegal, to suppress public meetings and all forms of public protest. It assists in this connection to recall the statement of Mr. Rees, M.P.—no friend of the

"Clearly Illegal."

Bengali—in the House of Commons on the 26th of February, 1906, when he said that the "strong public feeling in Bengal against Partition was expressed in a legitimate manner in the Press and at public meetings." Military police, usually Gurkhas, were drafted into towns where meetings were being held, and it is alleged they used unnecessary violence. At Serajgunge a large number of complaints—about thirty—were laid by Bengali gentlemen of good position against the police for assaults and ill-usage. At Burisal also several similar charges were brought. They were recorded by a subordinate official, and then summarily rejected by the District Magistrate, summons being refused and no investigation made. One of these cases was taken on appeal before the High Court of Calcutta, which declared the action of the magistrate "in contravention of the law," and "clearly illegal." The judges also commented on his dismissing the complaint "sitting in his private room, without giving the complainant or his pleader an opportunity of being heard. This was also improper."

(ii) On the 14th of November, 1905, barely a month after the Partition was effected, the Magistrate of Rungpur, one of the severed districts, issued an order directing that twenty-five of the leading inhabitants of the town should be enrolled as special constables, under Section 17 of the Police Act—a provision of the law which contemplates a condition of grave public disorder and rioting, with which the ordinary police is unable to cope. As a matter of fact no disturbance or breach of the peace of any kind had taken place for months, but there had

Law used to Humiliate.

been meetings, perfectly orderly, protesting against Partition. These gentlemen consisted of a barrister, a number of pleaders and landholders, including the chairman of the local municipality. They were required to carry batons and badges, and to attend at the police lines every morning in order to practise drill and the proper way of saluting superior police officers! Some of them were required to leave their homes and live in the police lines under the command of a head constable. In India the law compels any person, on whom the magistrate may fix, to serve as a special constable, whilst in England the citizen undertakes this duty as a volunteer.

This matter was also taken before the High Court at Calcutta, and at the same time a notice of action against the District Superintendent of Police was served, claiming Rs.10,000 for illegal appointment as special constables, and for the insult and humiliation involved. The very next day the District Magistrate informed all these special constables that they were released from duty as their appointment "had made the town comparatively quiet and there was now no immediate apprehension of the breaking of the law!" They were, however, required to hold themselves in readiness, and forbidden to leave Rungpur without permission.

Action for Rs. 10,000 Damages.

The High Court made short work of all these illegalities. Mr. Hill, the English barrister who appeared for the Bengalis, said that "there could be no greater indignity for these gentlemen than to force them to practise the goose step and salute the head constable whenever

"No Greater Indignity."

he ordered them to do so." These facts, he added, "amply justify the opinion that these appointments were not made for the purpose of the Act, but for the purpose of illegal punishment." The Chief Justice, Sir Francis Maclean, before whom this case came, let drop a very strong hint that the Government of Eastern Bengal would be acting in its own best interests if it withdrew from further proceedings. This hint was taken, and the Advocate-General announced that the Government would proceed no further in the matter.

(iii) These two attempts to interfere with the undoubted right of public meeting, if orderly, might have warned Sir Bampfylde Fuller to abstain from further vagaries. In April, 1906, a Conference was assembled at Burisal, Mr. Abdul Rasul, a Muhamadan barrister, and B.C.L. of Oxford, being in the chair, and Mr. Surendranath Banerjea the principal speaker. The magistrate, "under orders of Government," issued a prescript forbidding the raising of the cry "Bande Mataram" (Hail to the Motherland), or the forming of a procession. Both orders being of doubtful legality, the delegates, five hundred in number, all of good social position and many elderly men, proceeded to walk to the hall of meeting. They had hardly started when suddenly, without warning or provocation, a determined attack was made on them from behind by the police, who were armed with quarter-staffs, six feet long. Some of the delegates were felled to the ground, and several severely beaten. When these men afterwards applied to the District Magistrate for inquiry into

Delegates Assaulted.

these assaults, their complaints, made formally in Court, were summarily rejected. Mr. Banerjea was arrested and placed before the Magistrate, to whom he protested against the treatment to which he had been subjected. This protest was treated as a contempt of court, and he was fined Rs. 200. He was then fined another Rs. 200 for taking part in a procession without a licence. He had asked for an adjournment in order to obtain legal assistance and produce witnesses in his defence, but the application was peremptorily refused.

An appeal was made to the Sessions Judge of the district, who quashed the conviction for taking part in an illegal procession. Even Bengalis can walk through the streets of their own towns. Some strange revelations, however, attended the hearing of the case, the most remarkable being that the Police Superintendent admitted that the warrant for the arrest of Mr. Banerjea had been prepared and placed in the hands of the police before his arrival at Burisal, without the lodging of any complaint and before any offence could have been committed. The Sessions Judge upheld the conviction for contempt of court, whereupon a motion was made to the High Court at Calcutta, which held that no contempt had been committed, that the Magistrate's proceedings were illegal, and further condemned the Sessions Judge for introducing irrelevancies into his decision and basing it upon matters outside the record. In commenting on this case the *Times of India*, an Anglo-Indian journal, observed: "The High Court's judgment in Mr. Banerjea's case is

"Hundered very badly."

unanswerable. The Burisal authorities blundered very badly in ordering the dispersal of the Conference, and another bad blunder was the making out of the warrant before Mr. Banerjea's arrival." Sir Bampfylde Fuller resigned his appointment as Lieutenant-Governor, and it cannot be said that he brought a very judicial mind to his responsible office. It is a serious matter when the Executive Government breaks the laws it exists to maintain.

(iv) It became, however, necessary for the High Court to give the Government of Eastern Bengal another and severer lesson. At the beginning of March, 1907, Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, began what was intended to be a series of counter-meetings in favour of Partition. He commenced—and ended—at Comilla, the chief town of another severed district. A large procession of Musalmans was formed to escort him through the town, without any opposition from the police. Its members, however, acted in a very different manner from the Hindus of Burisal, whose meeting had been broken up with blameworthy violence. They had not gone far when they began to assault Hindus and loot Hindu shops. On the following evening another Muhamadan procession paraded the streets, and again took to plundering the houses of Hindus. Some one fired a shot-gun, with the result that one of the Muhamadan processionists was killed. On the information of a Musalman three men were arrested, a Hindu constable, a Hindu sub-inspector of police, and a Hindu attorney practising in the criminal courts of Comilla. The case came on for trial before

Hindu Shops Looted.

the Sessions Judge of Comilla, and the three men were convicted—the constable being sentenced to death and the sub-inspector of police and the attorney to transportation for life.

An appeal was in due course proffered before the High Court of Calcutta, and the conviction and all the sentences set aside. The judges, Mr. Justice Mitter and Mr. Justice Fletcher, observed that—

"Utterly Unreliable Evidence."

(*a*) "The learned Sessions Judge has ignored the most elementary principles for sifting evidence."

(*b*) His "findings of fact rest on utterly insufficient and unreliable evidence."

(*c*) The statements of the chief witness were uncorroborated and full of inconsistencies. "This want of veracity displayed by the man was patent, and it was surprising that the judge should have placed any reliance upon him."

(*d*) "The accused sub-inspector of police was clearly implicated because he was a police officer *doing his duty* at a troublesome time, and therefore rendered himself unpopular to a large number of Muhamadans of a low class."

(*e*) "Whoever fired the gun was certainly actuated by a desire to protect property from the Muhamadan rioters, and not with the intention of killing anybody."

(*f*) The most important comment of the High Court was in these words :—

"The method of the learned judge in dealing with the testimony of the witnesses by dividing them into two classes—Hindus and Musalmans—and accepting the evidence of one class and rejecting that of the other, is open to severe criticism.

The learned judge ought to have directed his mind solely to the evidence which had been given before him, and to have excluded from his consideration all preconceived sympathies with either sections of the population."

"Preconceived Sympathies."

This case created great excitement, and the following studiously moderate comment of the *Bengali* states the most serious aspect of affairs in India at the present time :—

"These proceedings serve to reveal the abnormal condition of things which the Partition of Bengal has created in the new Province. The ancient traditions of even-handed justice between class and class and race and race have disappeared, and even judges, carried away by the prevailing official feeling, sit upon the bench and discharge their duties with 'preconceived sympathies.' These 'sympathies,' which are not of the right sort, are universal—they are a part of the official creed of the new Province and taint the fountains of justice. This is, indeed, an exceedingly serious matter. If the impression were to go forth that Hindus cannot expect justice in the new Province, it would do more than anything else that we can think of to weaken the hold of the Government upon the vast Hindu population of the Empire. In these days of rapid intercourse and of free exchange of ideas between Province and Province, the grievance of the Hindus of the new Province would be shared by their co-religionists throughout the Empire. The policy of divide and rule is the feeblest of all policies, and history tells us that it recoils upon those who practise it."

"A Legitimate Aspiration."

(v) The last case that requires notice is amusing rather than tragic. Mr. Rai, a leading lawyer, was found guilty about the same time, March, 1907, of delivering a "seditious" speech, the gravamen of the charge against him being that he had advocated "Swaraj." On appeal to the High Court it was pointed out that this term

consisted of two words—*Swa* meaning self, and *raj* meaning government. Mr. Justice Fletcher said "unhesitatingly" that such a term would cover the form of administration in all our Colonies, and "that it was a legitimate aspiration of the people, and there was no harm in advocating it." The order of the magistrate, a Muhamadan gentleman, was accordingly reversed.

My only comment is that Parliament will be wilfully blind if it follows Mr. Morley's advice not to "subject Indian Administration to the supervision and criticism of the House of Commons." I fear he will come along some day to ask the British people to pay the bill such "administration" always costs.

Some Day the Bill.

CHAPTER IX

"SEDITION" IN THE PUNJAB

"What must have been the state of things which can compel cultivators, proverbially patient and long-suffering, accustomed to more or less of ill-usage and injustice at all times, to redress their wrongs by murder and in defiance of an ignominious death to themselves? How must their sense of justice have been violated? How must they have been bereft of all hope of redress from law or Government, before their patient and peaceful natures could be roused to the point of desperation required for such a deed?"—SIR GEORGE WINGATE on the Bombay Riots of 1877.

DURING the spring of last year England was shocked by accounts of serious rioting in several of the chief towns of the Punjab—Lahore, Delhi and Rawalpindi. The information came in the form of excited telegrams, followed by statements, which ought to have been reliable, in the House of Commons by the Secretary of State, indicating a great outbreak of sedition. As to the actual facts, the following passages from the Conservative *Pioneer* of the 17th of May last may help the timorous :—

"No Alarming Features."

"There are different kinds of mobs," it wrote—"dangerous and murderous mobs, and mobs which are only mischievous. It is the latter sort that has been making disturbances in the

Punjab. These incidents have been unsatisfactorily numerous, but such seriousness as they have is due rather to the frequency with which the rabble have succeeded in taking the authorities at a disadvantage than to any alarming features that have been revealed. On the contrary the temper, not only of what are called the respectable classes, but of the great bulk of the townspeople affected, has been entirely reassuring. Indignation and regret have been expressed universally at the doings of a small section of riff-raff and irresponsible youths."

"If we wish," this sensible journal continued, "to understand the true lesson of these disturbances we must get them into focus and view them in the right light and not in a distorted form. We think it is absurd to regard them as organised riots, premeditated and planned to bring about a collision with the civil authorities; we cannot by any stretch of description portray the mob as animated by active sedition, by the wish to injure, maim and kill, and carrying the secret sympathy and support of masses of the townspeople. All the evidence of all these occurrences in the Punjab shows that there were nothing more than disorderly rabbles to deal with, rabbles growing aggressive and mischievous as the chances were given them, and scattering in panic the moment there was a reappearance of the forces of law and order."

Such "town riots" are much too frequent in Indian cities, which always hold a large floating population of bad characters. They will never do much injury to the British Empire, but are quite useful to the gentlemen of the Jingo Press, who find in "sedition" the simplest and surest means of hardening the Englishman's heart against reform.

I will not discuss farther the character of the disturbances. It is more useful to try and ascertain their origin. Mr. Morley insisted again and again in the House of Commons that they were due to the preaching of "open sedition." Again and again in the House of Commons the small

Mr. Morley Misled.

body of ex-officials of the Indian Civil Service, who generally know what they are talking about, assured the Secretary of State that the cause, and the sole cause, of the disorder was agrarian; in other words, that the people of the Punjab, both Sikhs and Musalmans, were intensely incensed by continued enhancements of the land tax. Mr. Morley firmly refused to accept this explanation, and in the course of his Budget speech last July said: "I hope those who take up the position that this was an agrarian movement and not a political movement in the Punjab will see that the facts are against any such contention." (Opposition cheers.) In support of his argument he adduced nothing but an *ex parte* report from the head of the administration, which is blamed by the people of the Punjab for resisting and rejecting all their petitions.

"Ruined Beyond Redemption."

Fifteen years ago, Mr. S. S. Thorburn, Financial Commissioner to the Government of the Punjab, declared, as the result of a house-to-house inquiry, that over large areas the peasantry was "already ruined beyond redemption"; the chief cause assigned by him being "borrowing from moneylenders to pay land revenue." There have been two minor famines in the Punjab in the past ten years. During the past five years the Punjab has been swept by plague, and plague finds its victims amongst the poor, ill-nourished, and physically feeble. Last year 52,000 died in a single week. The Musalman community alone has lost half a million. In spite of these disasters, far from there being any remission of land tax, the revenue

derived from it has increased from £1,500,000 in 1891 to £1,925,000 in 1906, or by 30 per cent. in fifteen years. This is a state of things that cries aloud for investigation.

The *Daily News* of Calcutta is quite as Tory in its proclivities as its London namesake is Liberal, and, in fact, was founded as a kind of Government organ. In its issue of the 22nd of last May it wrote:—

"Greed the Basis of Discontent."

"It appears now that the discontent in the Punjab has its origin in a perfectly reasonable and tangible grievance—the increase of the Land Revenue assessment. It is the fetish of some ignorant minds that the Permanent Settlement was a mistake, and Lord Curzon was an exponent of that idea. As a matter of fact the increase of revenue obtained by a reassessment is trifling compared with the heartburning and discontent occasioned by a resettlement, and the sooner this simple fact is understood by the Government of India the better. The only way to ensure real tranquillity is to ensure property and to give people a chance. The Indian system of rack-rental deprives people of that chance, and breeds discontent. The best thing in the Punjab is for the Government to go into the assessment matter again, and recognise that liberality is the soul of content and greed the basis of discontent."

As a Liberal I must say that it does anger me to see a sincere Liberal like Mr. Morley, a prophet of the Liberal faith, hoodwinked as he has been. I challenge an inquiry into the "sedition" by any Commission or any body, by the House of Lords —even by any three or half-dozen prominent Englishmen. I am convinced that it would establish the absence of sedition and the presence of a great discontent due to rack-renting.

The Punjab peasantry used every means to obtain a fair hearing from their rulers. At their meetings they chanted a doggerel song that tells its own tale. A literal translation was published in the *Pioneer* on the 7th of June, and runs thus:—

The Song of the Peasantry.

"In vain did we send petitions to the Government,
All our cries have been fruitless;
Our words were valued as chaff,
The Government did not even accidentally think of us,
And paid no attention to our sufferings.
Our intention was to fall at the door of the King,
To lay our grievances before him;
Our song is the strain of a sorrowful chord."

There is not much sedition in this rather pitiful ditty; in fact, there is a good deal of humble loyalty. Anyhow, it proves that the agitation was entirely agrarian.

That the Secretary of State should have so positively denied the existence of agrarian discontent is the more remarkable as the *Times*, on the 27th of May, only two months before, had published an authoritative article on "Riots and Unrest in the Punjab," in which it described the great impolicy of the Punjab Government in administering and legislating for the extensive reclamations of land known as the Canal Colonies. It is impossible to praise too highly the high engineering skill of the men who made the great canals of the Punjab. They are a real work of progressive civilisation and an unmixed blessing to the Punjab, if only the tax-gatherer and the bureaucrat could have been kept at a distance.

An Unmixed Blessing.

The demands of land revenue were excessive, the irrigation rates still more excessive, and the rules and regulations of the most exasperating kind. The colonisation officers endeavoured to rule two millions of people, cultivating three millions of acres, as if they were dealing with a little model farm. The *Pioneer* sensibly remarked that a poker-backed Prussian official was mild in comparison with these canal bureaucrats.

"The Injustice of the Measure."

The tenants resented all this harassing interference; so the Punjab Government in its wisdom brought in a Colonisation Bill, to force all its silly fads down the throats of a sturdy peasantry by means of fines and imprisonment. The London *Times* tells us that—

"Feelings of fierce resentment spread fast, mass meetings were held and wild words were uttered. This was not all factious, for the feelings spread beyond the colony. Many of the *English officers* of Government, up and down the Province, protested against *the injustice of the measure* which was contemplated. The Punjab Government listened to the agitation, and very properly explained their position. The Bill was altered in sub-committee, and everything new and objectionable was cut out. The Bill was then passed in the local Legislative Council, all the Indian members voting against it."

As a matter of fact, much that was new and objectionable was left in, and Lord Minto wisely withheld his assent to the projected law. The *Times* suggestively records that "the wisest chief in the Punjab, after the Bill was passed, said, with a shake of his head, 'The Government should keep faith with its children.'" The children would have got nothing, but that they lost their tempers and violence was

feared—an old story in our administration of conquered countries.

The Sikh Regiments.

It may be useful to explain how it was that the Sikh regiments very quickly came to take a keen interest in this dispute. The policy of the Government—a wise one—was to use the colonies both as a means of rewarding old soldiers and as a recruiting ground in the future. The colonists were principally Sikhs. The Sikh soldiers at home on leave were naturally affected by the prevailing discontent, and carried the complaints of their relatives to their officers, who properly informed the military authorities at Simla. A mischievous leaflet was also circulated amongst the troops, but it is ridiculous to describe it as an incitement to mutiny. It is widely believed in India that it was Lord Kitchener's personal interference that secured the rejection of the fatuous Colonisation Bill. This wise act was immediately followed by the reduction of both the land tax and the water rate to half the absurd amounts to which they had been screwed up. The capital of seven millions sterling invested in the Punjab canals yielded in 1906–1907 the large net profit of 10½ per cent., whilst in the case of the Chenab Canal it rose to the extraordinary and unhealthy figure of nearly 22 per cent. It was in the Chenab colonies that the bitterest discontent existed.

This was all a blow to the Punjab Government hard to be borne, and it is only human that it should be glad to save its face. It did not discountenance the outcry about "sedition," "mutiny," &c., which

created extreme alarm. All the Europeans, including four venerable judges of the High Court, enlisted as privates in the local volunteers, although there were twenty thousand British troops within easy reach. Panic alone could justify the arrest of the six lawyers and the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai, against whom from that day to this no evidence of sedition in word or act has been forthcoming. Sir Henry Cotton, M.P., and Mr. Mackarness, M.P., have again and again asked for its production. A youth named Ajit Singh, twenty-three years of age, undoubtedly talked silly treason, but, as I will show later, the older and responsible men did all they could to restrain him.

To Save its Face.

These disorders in the Punjab led to the most remarkable State trial that has ever taken place in India. Six members of the Bar, three being barristers of the London Inns of Court, were put on their trial at Rawalpindi for inciting the subjects of the King-Emperor to rebellion. These men were arrested early in May, 1907, and were kept in prison, bail being refused, for five months, at the end of which time they were released, and a few days after acquitted of all complicity in sedition. The case entirely depended on the evidence of a number of Musalman witnesses of the humblest class, and of a Musalman sub-inspector of police. The trying Judge, Mr. Martineau, found that "their statements appear to be highly improbable and unreliable, and need no discussion." The Musalman sub-inspector deposed that he had taken notes of the speeches

A State Trial and a Just Judge.

"Improbable and Unreliable."

made by the lawyers, but admitted that he had destroyed them. Four of the witnesses sent to the District Magistrate of Rawalpindi what purported to be verbatim reports of the speeches, but the Judge rejected them as manifestly concocted. The four letters all bore the same postmark—5.30 a.m. on the 29th April. Their oral evidence was "conflicting and unreliable."

The following extracts from Mr. Martineau's judgment speak for themselves :—

"Untrustworthy and Malicious."

(i) "I find then that the evidence as to Hansraj and Gurdasram having used seditious or inflammatory language at the meeting of the 21st April is entirely untrustworthy."

(ii) "I have no doubt that a wrong construction has been put upon what Gurdasram said, and it appears to me more probable that the misconstruction was wilful and malicious than that it has arisen from a mistake."

(iii) "There is also not a particle of evidence to show that Mr. Khazan Sing, Mr. Jankinath, or Lala Mansaram had anything to do with the inciting of people in the city or at the railway workshops."

A Thoroughly Legitimate Agitation.

The most important portions of Mr. Martineau's decision deal with the connection of the lawyers with Ajit Singh and the real objects of their speeches.

"The only other point on which I need touch in connection with the meeting of the 21st April is the question whether the accused expressed approval or disapproval of Ajit's speech. There can be no doubt that his speech was inflammatory, and it is a point against the accused that they allowed him to go on speaking for a considerable time. On the other hand, there is reason to believe that Lala Hansraj did, as he says, pass notes to Ajit Singh in order to induce him to stop, and that he pulled

or tried to pull him down from the table when he was speaking. Gangaram (Prosecution witness No. 6) says he saw Lala Hansraj give a piece of paper to Ajit Singh while the latter was speaking, and also saw him pull Ajit Singh by his clothes."

The Judge makes it quite clear that the object of the meeting was a thoroughly legitimate one. He said :—

"Mr. Gurdasram urged the people to appeal to the Government in regard to the enhancement of the revenue, and we have the important fact that as a result of the meeting a memorial to His Honour the Lieut.-Governor regarding the enhanced assessment was actually drafted. The draft memorial and a synopsis giving the figures for the present and former assessments in different villages were found in Lala Amolakram's house after his arrest. The mere fact of a memorial and synopsis being prepared seems to me to go a long way to discredit the evidence produced in regard to the speeches delivered by the accused. Lala Hansraj and Mr. Gurdasram say that they got up after Ajit Singh had spoken and emphatically repudiated his remarks, and that Ajit Singh got angry and left the meeting. This much appears to me clear, that the object of the accused was that Government should be memorialised on the subject of the grievances or alleged grievances of the zemindars" (landholders).

Entirely against Rack-renting.

It thus appears that six innocent men of position and education, engaged in a just agitation against excessive enhancement of land revenue—increased in the Rawalpindi District from £27,500 annually in 1864 to £36,400 in 1884 and to £45,000 in 1904—were kept in jail for one hundred and fifty-three days, bail being refused by the High Court, on "false," "fabricated," and "malicious" evidence. The Hon. Mr. Gokhale, speaking last November face to face with the

Truth Prevailed.

Viceroy in the Council Chamber at Simla, made the following outspoken comments on this case and on the deportation of Lajpat Rai:—

"The whole country was convulsed, and while the Punjab itself was paralysed, in other parts of India even the most level-headed men found it difficult to express themselves with due self-restraint. That a man like Lala Lajpat Rai, loved by thousands, not in his own Province only, a man of high character and of elevated feeling, a keen religious and social reformer, and a political worker who, whatever his faults, worked only in broad daylight, should have been suddenly arrested and deported without trial, this was a proceeding which stunned the people throughout India.

"And, as regards the Rawalpindi case, what shall I say? For months the whole country witnessed the spectacle of the venerable Lala Hansraj, a man as incapable of promoting disorder as any member sitting at this table, with other gentlemen equally respectable, rotting in the lock-up, on a charge of inciting to violence and conspiring against the Crown. It will be long before the memory of the sufferings of these men is wiped from the public mind. Meanwhile, the country is waiting to see how the authorities deal with those who brought these sufferings on them by producing evidence which the trying magistrate has pronounced to be most untrustworthy and probably fabricated."

The whole Punjab "sedition" affair is an administrative scandal which should make English Liberals hang their heads with shame. My one hope is that now at length the question of land taxation in India will be pushed to the front by every real friend of good government

No "Sedition."

CHAPTER X

RACK-TAXING IN RURAL INDIA

"The Government assessment does not leave enough food to the cultivator to support himself and his family throughout the year."—SIR WILLIAM HUNTER, K.C.S.I., the Historian of India, in the Viceroy's Council, 1883.

"There is no more pathetic figure in the British Empire than the Indian peasant. His masters have ever been unjust to him. He is ground until everything has been expressed, except the marrow of his bones."—MR. HERBERT COMPTON in *Indian Life*, 1904.

LORD LAWRENCE declared in evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons that British Rule in India must fall if the agricultural population becomes our foe. This experienced warning has now for half a century been entirely disregarded. The land revenue of the Empire has, since the establishment of Imperial government in India, increased excessively, and of late years by leaps and bounds. Englishmen wonder why they are at times held up in the Indian Press to public hatred as fiends of injustice. They would themselves allow that their administration has made mistakes, but, surely, no mistake can explain such extreme virulence. There is only one explanation.

One Meal a Day.

You will generally find that the person who uses such language, or the editor of the journal which prints it, is the son of a peasant or in some way connected with the tenant class in India. He is certainly a man embittered by the intense poverty of a large part of the Indian peasantry. The number of human beings in India who subsist in perennial hunger, usually on one meal a day, was estimated a few years ago by the *Pioneer* at one hundred millions.

In the preceding chapter I have discussed the great increase in the burdens on the land in the Punjab, which have aroused a passion of ill-will that inexperienced observers have been unable to differentiate from sedition. It is over a quarter of a century since I first attempted to draw the attention of Englishmen to the condition of the agricultural classes in India. The land tax then amounted to £15,500,000 a year. It is now nearly £19,500,000, an increase of over 25 per cent. I wrote a pamphlet, entitled "The Ruin of an Indian Province," and in 1880 there was a lengthened debate in the House of Commons on its statements. Parliament and many people in England were prepared to consider them. The great Bombay-Madras Famine of 1877–78, with its five millions of victims, and subsequent murderous riots in Bombay, were still fresh in men's minds. A Conservative Government was in power when these calamities and tumults occurred, and it did not refuse an inquiry, to which I shall refer later. I am at present desirous of emphasising the fact that a Liberal Government, in spite of famines and experienced warnings, is still carrying on the

Back-taxing by Liberals.

same fatal policy of enhancement and even aggravating it. The Explanatory Memorandum to the Indian Budget issued last July by the Secretary of State gives at page 12 the total Land Revenue of the Indian Empire collected in 1905–6 as £18,129,572, and his own budget of land revenue for the following year, 1907–8, as £19,545,200. The increase is £1,415,628, or nearly 8 per cent. in twenty-four months—roundly at the rate of 40 per cent. in a single decade. India has cause to appreciate the coming to power of a Liberal Administration.

A great famine is again devastating the most fertile areas in Upper India. I would venture to draw attention to a warning I wrote five years ago in a chapter on "Famine and Taxation" in "The Failure of Lord Curzon," p. 38.

The Chief Cause of Famine.

"India," I declared, "is rapidly becoming a land steeped in perennial poverty. The evil is fortunately at present confined in its worst form to Southern and Central India, to Bombay, Madras, and the Central Provinces. But the pressure of the land revenue is severe in the North-Western Provinces, in Oudh, and in the Punjab. In spite of bad seasons and bad rainfall they have up to now suffered from true famine only over small areas. Mortality from starvation also has been low. There are not wanting, however, many signs that impoverishment, pauperisation in fact, has made much progress. Let us be warned in time by the example of Bombay."

This latest famine will cost the Indian Government millions of money in relief, and inflict a supreme misery on millions of men, women, and children in "the North-Western Provinces, Oudh and the Punjab." A splendid charity is being exercised, and

Sir John Hewett, the ablest Liutenant-Governor now in India, may be trusted to do all that a wise administrator can to alleviate the horrors of such a calamity. Would it not, however, be statesmanlike for the Secretary of State to investigate the allegation that the taxation on land is the chief cause of famine?

We have not been "warned in time by the example of Bombay." Still it is worth while to recall the calamity of 1877, when five millions of human beings, according to the estimates of the Census Department, perished miserably in Bombay and Madras, in spite of a lavish outlay on relief. The Government of India is the most charitable institution in the world, but the most pig-headed when its administration or taxation is called in question. It is absolutely unteachable. Thirty years ago, however, it was wise enough to inquire into the causes of famine and the riots that accompanied it. In Bombay, as now in Upper India, the local officials could find no explanation but drought, whilst the riots were due to the wickedness of the peasantry. The happy thought of "Sedition" and "Agitators" had not been invented. It was left to a Liberal administration to evolve this origin of agrarian disorder. A Commission of five members, consisting of a judge, two revenue officials from another Province, and two revenue officials from Bombay, was appointed. The two Bombay officers, though admitting much, were rather apologetic for their own Government. The independent three from other Provinces submitted a majority report of a most startling kind. It proved that there had been

"A Damning Indictment."

an increase of 30 per cent. in the land-tax in thirty years. This document is too lengthy and technical for quotation here, whilst my summary of it might not be accepted as impartial. I, therefore, quote the analysis made at the time by the *Pioneer*, then, as now, the most able English newspaper in India.

"Of the five members of the Commission," it wrote, "three" (the independent members), "namely, the judicial and the two North-West members, reply that it ('the final element of distress that broke the peasants' heart') must be looked for in the revised land revenue assessments, in themselves *extravagantly heavy*." "The arguments of the majority," it continued, "form a grave indictment against the Bombay Revenue Survey. Briefly they may be thus summarised: The enhancements made at the recent revision were, judging by all known standards, excessive. Viewed in conjunction with the status of those on whom they were imposed they were *ruinous*. They were framed, finally, for the most part on conjectural and merely arithmetical data, much of which seems wrong. As to the excessiveness of the assessments, it is shown on the Survey figures that the enhancement, as imposed originally, ranged in different talukas (sub-districts) from 33 to 66 per cent. On individual villages it was often doubled; on individual holdings it was constantly more than doubled. The assessment is judged from its own mouth; and we find it imposing enhancements of 38 per cent. in the face of admitted depression, or forcing 77 per cent. down the throats of the local officers. *A more damning indictment was never recorded against a civilised government.*"

The Bombay peasant, the *Pioneer* added, had accepted for many years, "with characteristic patience and silence the yoke of British misgovernment." Sir George Wingate, a distinguished Bombay official, made a similar pathetic reference to the Indian

peasants' "long-suffering patience." *The same is true of the Punjab to-day.*

If we turn to the Madras Presidency we find the same blasting of a people's strength by a merciless taxation. There also famine succeeds famine. The land revenue is ever rising, and evictions by the State almost exceed belief. Even since the beginning of the present century enhancements of land-tax in Malabar have been as great as 84, 85, and 105 per cent. in different revenue sub-districts. Again I quote from a Conservative journal, the *Englishman*, of Calcutta, the foremost newspaper of the capital of India. On February 17, 1880, it wrote :—

"The Enormous Increase of Revenue."

"The late Madras famine has raised the question as to what the Government has done to protect the agriculture of Southern India, in return for the revenue raised from it. On the one hand, there can be no doubt that the Madras revenue has been very greatly increased since India passed to the Crown. In that year, 1858–59, the land revenue of Madras was under 3¼ millions sterling, and its average during the previous five years had been under 3⅛ millions. In 1876, the year before the late famine, it was 4½ millions. Twenty years of British rule have, therefore, increased the Government demand upon the agriculture of Madras by over one million, or one-third of the whole land revenue paid by that Presidency to the Company in 1858. There are not wanting those who affirm that this increased taxation had much to do with the late calamity. The husbandmen were less able, according to this view, to bear the strain of bad seasons, *in consequence of the enormous increase in the revenue taken from them.*"

A 30 per cent. increase in thirty years brought famine and riot in Bombay. A 33 per cent. increase in twenty years in Madras naturally had no better

results. In fifteen years there has been an increase of 30 per cent. in the Punjab, and we are again face to face with riot and tax-caused "sedition."

I would especially beg every Englishman as a Christian, even as a normally humane human being, to reflect on the following facts describing the unexampled eviction, in a single Province, of five-sixths of a million of families or at least four millions of our "fellow-subjects" in eleven years. In 1893 the Hon. Mr. A. Rogers, of the Indian Civil Service and ex-Member of the Bombay Council, writing to the Under-Secretary of State for India stated:—

Eviction by the Million.

"In the eleven years from 1880 to 1890 there were sold by auction for the collection of land revenue the occupancy rights of 1,963,364 acres of land held by 840,713 defaulters, in addition to *personal* property to the value of Rs.2,965,081. Of the 1,963,364 acres, 1,174,143 had to be bought in on the part of the Government for want of bidders, that is to say, very nearly 60 per cent. of the land supposed to be fairly and equitably assessed could not find purchasers, and only the balance of 779,142 acres was sold. The evils of the farming system in Bombay have been pointed out in my 'History of the Bombay Land Revenue,' but I doubt if that system at its worst could have shown such a spectacle as that of nearly 850,000 ryots (heads of families) in the course of eleven years sold out of about 1,900,000 acres of land."

Roundly, one-eighth part of the entire agricultural population of the Madras Province was sold out of house and land in little more than a decade. Not only were their farms brought to auction, but their poor personal belongings, their furniture and their cooking utensils, their beds and everything but their

scanty clothes were sold to provide money for "Imperial" expenditure. The picture is incomplete till it is remembered that these eleven years of "denudation" immediately followed the terrible famine of 1877–78 during which Madras lost three millions of its inhabitants by starvation. The bureaucrats who stolidly committed this stupendous administrative crime, were honest, kindly Englishmen, moved from one district to another every couple of years, working hard and thinking little, mere cogs in the financial machine, just like the worthy placid gentlemen who are to-day ruining the Punjab and its stalwart Sikh population.

An Income-tax of 65 per cent. Admitted.

In replying to a question of mine, in April last, Mr. Morley stated that "50 per cent. of the net assets is the ordinary standard of assessment of land revenue *alone* throughout India." Net assets mean the annual profit, after paying the cost of cultivation—the income, in fact, of the farmer. So we have it admitted that the normal land-tax or rent amounts to a 50 per cent. income-tax—ten shillings in the pound. The word "alone" needs explanation. It means that the farmer has, besides his land-tax, many other rates and cesses to pay for roads, police, irrigation, public works, &c. Mr. Morley's answer suggested that 50 per cent. is the *higher* limit of the land-tax throughout India; so a few days later I questioned him definitely in regard to the Central Provinces, giving date and number of the Government of India's order. The reply I received runs thus: "The rule at present in force in the Central Provinces is that the assessment

should not be *less* than 50 per cent. of the assets, and should not exceed 60 per cent.; but in exceptional cases, if the existing assessment has hitherto exceeded 65 per cent., and been paid without difficulty, it is provided that the assessment shall be fixed at 65 per cent." It, therefore, appears that 50 per cent. is the *lower* limit, and that it may be 65 if it can be paid without difficulty! We are always assured that the land-tax is light and always paid without difficulty, which perhaps explains the fact that in the Central Provinces over a million people disappeared—died of starvation, between 1891 and 1901, as admitted in the Census Report of the latter year.

The most convincing proof of the fact that more than half his profits is taken from the farmer, is that a very distinguished body of retired Indian officials, including four gentlemen who had been members of the Legislative Councils of the Viceroy or of Governors, and headed by Sir Richard Garth, ex-Chief Justice of the High Court of Calcutta, petitioned the Secretary of State, on December 20, 1900, asking that the "Government demand should be limited to 50 per cent. of the value of the net produce." This memorial was referred to Lord Curzon, who refused to lay down any such limit. No such limit exists, or ever did exist, as an independent inquiry would immediately prove. Including the cesses and rates for roads, irrigation, police, &c., I will undertake to establish that the 65 per cent. limit is often exceeded.

The Petition of a Chief Justice.

The defence of the Government of India, as put forward by Lord Curzon in rejecting the above

memorial, was a very simple one. He urged that, admitting that the land-tax did amount to between 50 and 65 per cent. of the net income of the farmer, it was also certain that the tax really did not exceed 7 to 10 per cent. of his gross profit, that is, of the price realised by the sale of his crops. Since civilised government began was there ever such an absolutely ridiculous attempt at justification? Yet I have heard it used in the House of Commons by Sir Henry Fowler, who is supposed to be a business man. Can it be a sincerely honest defence of the land-tax in India? What would the owners of a coal-mine say to the Income Tax Assessor who based his assessment on the total gross receipts at the pit's mouth, without taking into account the cost of labour, machinery, management, and general upkeep? Even a 5 per cent. income-tax on gross receipts would break nine out of ten of the industrial undertakings of England. And it is this kind of political economy that is employed to justify the taxation of the Indian peasantry, whose total annual income was estimated by Lord Curzon himself at £1 1s. 5d. per head of the population.

A Ridiculous Defence.

In conclusion, I beg to draw attention to one of the flagrantly inaccurate statements that the India Office puts in the mouths of its temporary chiefs in Parliament. Mr. Hobhouse, the Under Secretary, in replying to a question of mine on May 16, 1907, stated that "It is also unquestionably a fact that our assessment for land revenue is anything from 15 to 30 per cent. lower than that of the native rulers who were there before

An India Office Fable.

our time." I will take the single example of Bombay, which province was conquered in 1817. Its land revenue under its last native rulers was 8,000,000 of rupees, as estimated by its first British collectors. The second year of our government saw it increased to 11,500,000, and in 1823 to 15,000,000. It reached 28,000,000 in 1855; 37,000,000 in 1875, and soared to 48,500,000 of rupees in 1895. It is, however, really impossible to make any effective comparison, as we have no information of the area under cultivation in the days of native rule or of the then population. But this we do know, that the native system of assessment was the justest ever applied. It was of Musalman origin and founded on the Koran. There is little of the teaching of the Bible in our treatment of the poorest peasantry under our dominion. Our assessment is made once for twenty or thirty years, which may be a period of luxuriant crops or of drought. The God-fearing Musalman assessed the Government share *annually* at harvest time, and took each year the value of one-fourth part of the standing crop, whether good or bad. The revenue was thus small in years of scarcity, whilst the State properly enjoyed its share of the wealth of a prosperous season. The Indian peoples would go mad with joy if they saw any hope of the British Government reviving this admirable "native" procedure. They have petitioned for it, but the Statistical Department reported that its acceptance would involve a great reduction of rent and revenue. I am quite aware that it is impossible to adopt it now, but that does not justify the misrepresentation of "native rulers."

CHAPTER XI

THE DECADENCE OF THE INDIAN ADMINISTRATION

I HAVE already quoted in the Preface a passage from the great Conservative journal of India, the *Pioneer*, describing the present Government of India as "a top-heavy, bureaucratic hierarchy, mechanical and doctrinaire." It was not always so; and no progress will be made in Indian administration till the causes of its stagnation and decadence have been examined and removed.

"A Doctrinaire Hierarchy."

The Indian Civil Service continues to-day, as it has been for a century, composed of as able and high-minded a body of public servants as exists in the world, but a great change has passed over its spirit and its personnel. Down to the time of the Mutiny it was a close preserve for the relatives and friends of the Directors of the East India Company, and in some degree suffered from the narrowness of the field from which it was recruited. The old Haileybury Service, the name by which it was called from the College at which its cadets were educated, had, however, the enormous advantage of an intimate acquaintance with the people of India. A large number of its members

The Old Haileybury Service.

had been born in India, and the associations of childhood tended to a very great kindliness towards Indians. When I went to India first I was much struck by the sincere friendliness that existed between Indian gentlemen of position and the European servants of the Crown. They often went out shooting together, and the magistrate and the judge were frequent visitors at the houses of the gentry during native social and religious festivals. The word "Babu," which means father, was still a term of courtesy, used much as the prefix *père* is employed in a French village. Intercourse was, in fact, as intimate as widely differing domestic customs would allow.

The first change came with the advent of the competition-wallah, who was recruited from an area as wide as that of his predecessor was narrow. The successful competitors came from the outlying colleges of the United Kingdom, from the Marischal College, Aberdeen, and from Queen's College, Cork, from Owens College, Manchester, and Aberystwyth. Indeed, the Celtic fringe contributed a very large number of the first competition civilians, and they brought to their duties a cheerful sympathy with the people of India. Their English brethren were also kindly, broad-minded officials, and much good-will existed between them and the people. Their two years' probationary training was spent mostly in London, where they acquired some of the mental humility of men of the world.

The Competition-Wallah.

The real change occurred about a quarter of a

century later when Lord Salisbury made Oxford the training centre of the young men who were to become the administrators of India. That they should be educated at the great English University seemed at first sight an excellent idea, but it had great disadvantages. The majority of the men so trained, though cultured and every way admirable in European society, unfortunately had acquired that distant, superior, half-supercilious manner which renders so many Englishmen difficult in their dealings with other races. The spirit of Oxford University at that time was that of Professor Jowett, Master of Balliol —the spirit of the Jingoism that in after years was to involve England in serious trouble. Professor Jowett's letters to Lord Lansdowne during his vice-royalty, published in 1899, show what the ideals of Oxford were. He warned his ex-pupil that "whenever we admit the masses of India to representation, they will flood and drown us." "Educated Indians should be treated with the greatest courtesy and even compliment, but of course if they go beyond their tether they have to be stopped"; adding "that the first duty of the English rulers of India is to maintain themselves." The Master of Balliol seems, however, to have recognised the kind of administrator this idea of duty was likely to produce.

The Oxford of Jowett.

"The English and Indian tempers," he wrote, "can never harmonise. The Englishman has no sympathy with other nations. He cannot govern without asserting his superiority. He has always a latent consciousness of the difference of colour. And hence a native would rather be under the capricious sway

of one of the native princes, than under the equitable administration of a Civil Servant."

This uncomplimentary appreciation of his fellow-countrymen was true only of the Englishmen he came in contact with at Oxford. The non-University Englishmen—the merchant or the engine-driver—gets on very well with Indians. My experience also is that the natives of India prefer a British official of the right sort, from whom they expect and generally get justice in our general administration and in our courts of law.

For the last twenty-five years the Civil Service and the people of India have become more and more estranged, and the cause is largely Oxford, which, with all its culture and manliness, is hopelessly uncongenial. The examinations for the Civil Service just suit the education given there, and *alumni* of the Scotch, Irish, and Welsh colleges, who now pass out, are few and far between. The last list of successful candidates shows thirty-nine out of eighty educated at Oxford. Twenty-six were graduates of Cambridge; but, of those who elect for Indian employment, many prefer to reside at Oxford, and Balliol ideals soon unfit them for ruling a conquered people with sympathy or common sense.

Balliol Ideals.

The failure of the administration in recent years is also largely connected with the gradual breaking up of the governing service in both the supreme and provincial governments into two sections — the Secretariat and the general body of district officers and judges. In the old days a man became a secretary to Government

The Secretariat System.

after a long period of training in district administration, rarely less than twenty years. During the past quarter of a century inner rings have grown up which are recruited by young men of ambition and ability, especially by those who wield a facile pen and use it for the defence of the views of those to whom they owe their immature promotion. A clever young civilian, a few years after he reaches India, before he has learnt even one of the languages of the country or is in touch with the people, is often nowadays appointed to be an assistant or under-secretary, say, at Calcutta or Lahore. Without ever returning to district work, he develops by years of patient office work, aided perhaps by an influential marriage, into a deputy secretary or a full secretary, or an inspector-general, or arrives at some other high office, even a lieutenant-governorship. By degrees, in this manner, the Governments of India, local and supreme, have passed into the hands of groups of clever doctrinaire Imperialists of the Curzon type, dogmatic and self-sufficient, who know little more about India than if they had spent their lives in the India Office at London. A few of them sometimes return to district work, and are generally failures when they come to grips with actual administration. They form the "Governments" which so often muddle things from sheer ignorance or from a desire to push some ill-considered administrative fad. There is an old feud between the Secretariat and the experienced district officers, who are constantly forced by their discipline and loyalty to carry out measures they

"Governments" without Training.

condemn and know to be bad. The Secretariat official always writes in the name of "His Excellency the Viceroy" or "His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor," and must be obeyed. Lord Curzon's Partition of Bengal is a case in point. It was generally—I might say, universally—condemned by the older district officers, who, however, had to give effect to, and fight for a measure they knew to be radically unsound.

Another cause of ill-success in Indian government is the fact that in every department an officer gains the top of the tree when he is far advanced in his service and is approaching compulsory retirement under some limit-of-age ordinance. This disadvantage is aggravated at times by what is known as the five-years' rule, the period during which some high authorities, from the Viceroy downwards, hold office. It is not so much that the frequent changes of personnel are in themselves injurious, but these rules induce a spirit of hurry in high places. When a man knows that he has got only a limited time in which to carry through some great measure, he is very liable to rush things and to force to a conclusion matters which need a slower development. Age limits in the Civil Services of England have not these unsatisfactory results because their members do not originate policies, but are merely the agents of statesmen, who are not affected by such regulations and who can consequently take their own time.

Hurry in High Places.

Frequent furloughs and short leave to England often disturb officials' minds. India is no longer the